

# RISE OF THE CHRISTIAN POWER IN INDIA

VOL. II

*BY*

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# PREFACE

## Calcutta-100 Materials for the History of British India

"History must from time to time be rewritten, not because many new facts have been discovered, but because new aspects come into view, because the participant in the progress of an age is led to standpoints from which the past can be regarded and judged in a novel manner."—Goethe.

"History, so far, has been the most immoral and perverting branch of literature. It exalts greed and wholesale murder, when greedy and murderous lusts are satisfied in the names of nations. Fraud is taken as evidence of clever diplomacy. What is counted immoral down below is held admirable in Courts and on Thrones."—M. Hervé.

"History is not mainly a science which proceeds by analysis; it is the attempt to collect and arrange in a living picture an enormous mass of details. Too rigid definitions, like lines which are too hard and marked, spoil the total effect."

—Merz's *History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 1, p. 5.

"I have learnt that in mathematics we have to rely on genius, in physics on experiment, in law, human and divine, on authority, IN HISTORY, ON TESTIMONY."—Leibnitz.

"We must try to separate fiction from falsification, and strain our gaze so as to recognise the lineaments of truth liberated from those retouchings. The removal of the fabulous, the destruction of what is deceiving, may satisfy the critic; he only desires to expose a deceptive story. . . . The historian, however, requires something positive; he must discover at least some probable connection and put a more plausible narrative in the place of that which he has had to sacrifice to his conviction."—Niebuhr.

A good historian should consult authors who have spoken of events, the archives in which unpublished documents are found, newspapers, private letters, memoirs and even tradition. He has to gather probabilities from every source and then compare these probabilities, and weigh and discuss them before deciding. Unfortunately, India does not possess a reliable history of her past or even of modern times. It is not necessary to refer to the period of remote antiquity. During the British period of her existence, India has not produced any one who would take the trouble of writing a true history of her past and present.\* To expect a true and reliable history of India from the natives of England is almost an impossibility.† This is not to be wondered at. "Politics and history," wrote the learned Professor Sir J. A. Seeley, "are only different aspects of

\* Regarding the want of a proper history of Ireland, Lecky writes :

"That proportion of the national talent and scholarship which ought in every country to be devoted to elucidating the national history, has in Ireland not been so employed. . . . Irish history is shamefully chaotic, undigested, and unelaborated and it presents in this respect a most humiliating contrast to the history of Scotland. The explanation is very obvious. For a long period the classes who possessed almost a monopoly of education and wealth, regarded themselves as a garrison in a foreign and a conquered country. . . . The highest literary talent was accordingly diverted to other channels, and Irish history has passed to a lamentable extent into the hands of religious polemics, of dishonest partisans, and of half-educated and uncritical enthusiasts."

—Lecky's *History of England*, second edition, Vol. II, (1879), page 288.

† "Each nation, in the main, writes its own history best; it best knows its own land, its own institutions, the relative importance of its own events, the characters of its own great men. But each nation has its peculiarities of view, its prejudices, its self-love, which require to be corrected by the impartial or even hostile view of others."

—Goldwin Smith's *Lectures on the Study of History*, 2nd edition, pp. 37-38.

"History cannot furnish its own inductive law. An induction, to be sound, must take in, actually or virtually, all the facts before her. What is past she knows in part, what is to come she knows not, and can never know. The scroll from which she reads is but half unrolled: and what the other half contains, what even the next line contains, no one has yet been able to foretell."—*Ibid.*, p. 56.

"If all mankind were one State, with one set of customs, one literature, one code of laws, and this State became corrupted, what remedy, what redemption would there be? None but a convulsion which would rend the frame of society to pieces, and deeply injure the moral life which society is designed to guard. Not only so, but the very idea of political improvement might be lost, and all the world might become more dead than China. Nations redeem each other. They preserve for each other principles, truths, hopes, aspirations, which, committed to the keeping of one nation only, might, as frailty and error are conditions of man's being, become extinct for ever. They not

the same study."\* The habits of thought of the natives of England have been mainly formed by political life. Hence the observations of Lecky are exactly to the point. In his work on Rationalism in Europe, Lecky writes :

"The object of the politician is expediency.....A disinterested love of truth can hardly co-exist with a strong political spirit. In all countries where the habits of thought have been mainly formed by political life, we may discover a disposition to make expediency the test of truth."

The histories of India written by Englishmen are one-sided and not reliable. It could not have been otherwise. For, a true historian should be a philosopher, which the English are not.

"The object," writes Lecky, "of the philosopher is truth;.....Nothing can be more fatal in politics than a preponderance of the philosophical spirit.....It is probable that the capacity for pursuing abstract truth for its own sake, which has given German thinkers so great an ascendancy in Europe, is in no slight degree to be attributed to the political languor of their nation."

If the English were to turn philosophers, then the political languor of their nation would set in. Even their greatest philosopher, Herbert Spencer, whom John Stuart Mill styled "the boldest thinker that English speculation has yet produced," was not free from the bias of political spirit. This has been proved to demonstration by the late American socialist writer, Henry George, in his work, named "A perplexed philosopher." It is not politically expedient and it is not to their interest that Englishmen should write a true account of the history of India. It is unfortunate also that Indians have not written any complete history of their country.

English authors have spread erroneous views of Indian history, have told their tale very prettily, and in a way which pleases the taste of their countrymen and countrywomen, and that class of readers have accepted it, true or false. It is, therefore, that Indian authors have an uphill fight to wage, for they have to champion truth against falsehood.

But the difficulties of the Indian historian of the British period are much increased by the fact that most of the political events and transactions of that period have been described by Englishmen. "It has become almost a proverb," writes Freeman,

"—that no two eye-witnesses describe the same event in exactly the same way." †

.....A very little thought will bring any of you to see that absolute certainty is unattainable by the very best historical evidence. Be the witness who he may, there is always the possibility both of error and of falsehood.....The geologist may err in interpreting the witness of the rocks, but the rocks themselves can neither err nor lie. Now, not only may the historian err in

only raise each other again when fallen, they save each other from falling. They support each other's steps by sympathy and example, they moderate each other's excesses and extravagances and keep them short of the fatal point by the mutual action of opinion, when the action of opinion is not shut out by despotic folly." Ibid., p. 71.

"History is a series of struggles to elevate the character of humanity in all its aspects, religious, intellectual, social, political, rising sometimes to an agony of aspiration and exertion, and frequently followed by lassitude and relapse, as great moral efforts are in the case of individual men. Those who espouse the theory of necessary developments as the key to history are driven to strange consequences." Ibid., p. 95.

\* Professor Goldwin Smith, as quoted by Freeman, also considered "history but past politics, and that politics are but present history." Freeman's *Methods of Historical Study*, page 8.

Hence the people reared on politics very often make "history the prostitute of politics."

† EYE WITNESSES NOT ALWAYS TRUSTWORTHY.

"My faith in historical narrative, founded in anything else than personal observation, has been greatly shaken by the numerous instances in which, during the present campaigns, anecdotes apparently trustworthy, have subsequently appeared untrue. The information I collected, to add to my own observation of the events just narrated, did not always bear sifting and several particulars were given me by eye-witnesses, who had the best opportunities of watching the course of events, which an examination of the ground convinced me were erroneous. In these moments of intense interest and excitement, the imagination has undue sway, and gaps are filled up by suppositions adopted merely for their plausibility and convenience, till it is difficult to separate fact from fiction, and the whole assumes the coherent and circumstantial air of perfect truth...."

—From Hamley's Campaign of Sebastopol, 1855.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### SITUATION OF AFFAIRS, AND CONSPIRACIES AND INTRIGUES AGAINST HOLKAR.

It has already been said that Monson's retreat placed the British in the most critical and awkward position possible. Referring to this retreat, General Wellesley wrote:—"I tremble at the political consequences of that event." The Commander-in-Chief was ordered to take the field in person so that the English might have an early opportunity of wiping away the disgrace which they had suffered. The Governor-General at the same time ordered his brother General Wellesley, who was at that time in Calcutta, to immediately return to the Deccan and to resume the political and military command of the affairs there. General Wellesley left Calcutta in the beginning of October, 1804.

It is necessary here to relate in detail the critical position of the English in India at this period.

General Lake, as said so often before, boasted of a 'secret manner' of managing affairs. His secret manner consisted in bribing and corrupting officers and men in the employ of Sindhia and intriguing with them against their master. His successes in Northern India were to be accounted for in this manner of carrying on intrigues. He fed the minds of men with smooth, specious and false promises. But when the Doab, that is, that portion of Hindustan which lies between the rivers Jumna and Ganges, passed into the hands of the British, the inhabitants were quite undeceived. They found that they had changed King Log for King Stork. The unsympathetic British under the authority and guidance of Lake committed all sorts of atrocities and excesses upon the non-Christian population of the Doab. Lake, as said in another place, showed himself as a vile monster when Commander-in-Chief in Ireland. He does not seem to have much changed his nature in India. But, what specially inspired the people of the Doab with hatred against the British was the indulgence of the latter in killing that inoffensive and useful animal, the cow. The great Akbar, than whom no other non-Hindu ruler of India better understood the feelings and prejudices of the Hindus, with his far-seeing statesmanship prohibited the Muhammadans from killing cows within his dominions. Even the latter-day effeminate and degenerate Mughal rulers, who by their misconduct and the re-imposition of that iniquitous poll-tax on the Hindus known as the *Jazia*, precipitated the downfall of the Muhammadan rule in India, tried to conciliate the feelings of the Hindus by refraining from killing the cow. For nearly 300 years or more, no cow had been killed in Hindustan for the sake of beef. But imagine the feelings of the Hindus when they found the British polluting their sacred city of Muttra by killing the cow,—an animal held in reverence by them and which had not been killed there by any beef-eater within the memory of the oldest men living. Their feelings were outraged and they naturally looked to

the independent princes of India to deliver them from the bondage of the English.

Monson, smarting under the disgrace and humiliation inflicted on him by Holkar, discovered a correspondence that had been going on between Holkar and the Raja of Bharatpur. Bharatpur is a small principality in Bundelcund and its Raja was a Jat prince. The Jats had asserted their independence and founded the principality of Bharatpur during the days of the decline and downfall of the Mughals in India. The founder of the principality was Raja Surajmal.

Bharatpur was one of those states with which the British entered into an alliance in 1803 when they were going to war with Sindhia and the Raja of Berar. The Jat prince Raja Ranjit Singh was the ruler of Bharatpur at this time. He was not a statesman. Had he been so, he would not have been so easily prevailed upon by the English to conclude an alliance with them and help them against Sindhia and the Raja of Berar. He does not even appear to have been an intelligent or energetic prince. This has been borne testimony to by Lake himself. Writing to the Marquess Wellesley from Cawnpur on the 13th August, 1804, General Lake said :

"From the meeting I had with Rajah Runjeet Singh in Camp, and from common report, I am inclined to believe that his character is by no means of that daring stamp as to induce him readily to pursue measures so fraught with danger to himself as his present conduct would appear to indicate. His son, Koer Rundhere Singh, who was also in my Camp, is of a character equally indolent and devoid of ability."

A question here naturally arises whether the Raja of Bharatpur had been carrying on correspondence with Holkar to 'subvert the lately established power of the British. In the published Despatches of the Marquess Wellesley or of the Duke of Wellington, there is nothing to show, much less to prove that the Raja of Bharatpur was carrying on any secret correspondence with Holkar detrimental to the English in India. Even the Marquess Wellesley does not seem to have been convinced of the so-called treachery of the Raja of Bharatpur; for writing a letter marked 'Private' to Lake, so late as November, 26, 1804, the Governor-General observed :

"you will also, I trust, proceed against the Rajah of Bhurtpore, *if his treachery should be proved.*"

From the words put in italics it is evident that the Governor-General did not think that the Raja of Bharatpur had hostile designs against the English.\*

\* In reply to General Lake's letter of the 13th August, 1804, the Marquess Wellesley wrote on the 22nd August, 1804 :

"The documents transmitted with your Excellency's despatch afford ample proof of the existence of a traitorous design to engage the power of Jeswant Rao Holkar in the prosecution of purposes inimical to the British interests in Hindustan.

"I am however disposed to believe that Rajah Runjeet Singh, Rajah of Bhurtpore, and his son Koer Rundhere Sing, although deeply implicated in the existing design by their intercepted letters and communications, are rather to be considered as the instruments of their respective servants and adherents, than as principal contrivers of this nefarious project.

"The project has probably originated among the desperate characters, . . . and it appears reasonable to presume, that the intrigues and machinations of those abandoned adventurers have involved



Besides the Raja of Bharatpur was under obligations to them. On the 13th August, 1804, Lake wrote to the Marquess Wellesley:

"It may be proper to remark, that this treacherous correspondence appears to have commenced soon after Raja Runjeet Sing had entered into a treaty with the British Government, by which he was permanently released from the tribute formerly paid by him to the Mahrattas, and was carried on at a time when he was receiving the most undoubted proof of the friendship and favor of the British Government, by my having granted to him Sunuds, subject to your Excellency's confirmation, for countries of the annual revenue of about four lacs of rupees, which were contiguous to his former possessions, and not included as the line proposed by your Lordship as the boundary of the British possession.

Lake presumed treachery on the part of the Raja of Bharatpur, but in the intercepted correspondence there is nothing to implicate that prince. He forwarded the intercepted correspondence to the Governor-General. That the Marquess Wellesley also did not consider the Raja treacherous will be evident from the extracts of his letter to Lake, we have already given above. But the fact of the Raja having given shelter to the fugitive Holkar and his shattered forces beneath the walls of Deeg has been urged as a pretext to consider him as hostilely inclined to the English. In our opinion, the fact of the Jat prince Ranjit Singh not denying an asylum to Holkar while *in extremis* shows his magnanimity and brings out in bold relief the strong character of the Hindus noted for their high ideal of hospitality. When Holkar, defeated and pursued by the English, turned his steps towards Bharatpur, Raja Ranjit Singh had every thing to lose and nothing to gain by giving an asylum to Jeswant Rao. Of course, the law of hospitality, *as understood amongst the Asiatics in general, and Hindus in particular*, is a thing quite unknown amongst the Christians and natives of the Western countries. Hence, it is difficult for them to understand the motive of the Raja of Bharatpur to afford refuge to Holkar, who had been defeated and was being pursued by the English.

The hostile intentions of the Raja of Bharatpur against the English not being proved, it is necessary to explain the attitude of persecution which the latter adopted towards him. The time at which the British tried to open their campaign of persecution of the Raja of Bharatpur should be very particularly noted. It was the time when Holkar had inflicted humiliation and disaster on them. So it appears to us that the real cause of the intended campaign against the Raja of Bharatpur consisted in the defeat which the English had suffered from Holkar. It was considered politically expedient to show that they could beat some one, and so they determined to beat the Raja of Bharatpur, for that prince

the Rajah of Bhurtpore and his son in a design evidently contrary to their interests, and of which the success could not prove advantageous to any other class of persons than the mean, profligate, and indigent contrivers of the original plot."

The Governor-General seems to have taken a just view of the whole affair. But those 'abandoned adventurers' were mostly men who owed allegiance to the English. In fact, it was the inhabitants of the territories then lately acquired by the British who had become quite disgusted with their new masters and therefore were 'plotting' with the Raja of Bharatpur and his son.

was not expected to make any firm stand against the English, as on the 13th August, 1804, Lake wrote to the Governor-General that

"the power or resources of Raja Ranjeet Sing cannot reasonably give any cause of alarm for the result, should it be deemed expedient to punish his treacherous conduct."

Who were those who smelt hostile designs on the part of the Raja of Bharatpur against the English? It was Lake, the Commander-in-Chief, and his worthy protege, Monson, regarding them, the fact should be borne in mind that they had been smarting under the humiliation consequent on their late disasters. Dating his letter from Cawnpur, 13th August, 1804, Lake wrote to the Marquess Wellesley:

"Having for some time past had reason to believe that a correspondence very inimical to the British interests existed between Raja Runjeet Singh, the Raja of Bhurtpore, and Jeswunt Rao Holkar, I directed your Excellency's agent to inform Mr. Thomas Mercer, who is in charge of the police of the city of Muttrah, of my suspicions, and to desire that he would use the means which his vicinity to Bhurtpore and the Superintendents of the Police of Muttrah might afford him to discover the channel of this correspondence.

"Mr. Mercer, accordingly, having been informed by the people whom he had employed secretly for the purpose, that the accredited vakeel from Jeswunt Rao Holkar to Raja Runjeet Sing was then in the city, caused him to be apprehended, and his papers to be taken charge of and sealed until he should receive my further orders.

"The deposition of this person, by name Nerunjun Lall, taken before Mr. Mercer on the 1st instant, states that he has been long employed as the channel of communication between Jeswunt Rao Holkar and the Raja of Bhurtpore, and several zemindars in the Doab, and that the object of the correspondence carried on was the entire subversion of the British power and influence in Hindostan.

"I yesterday received from Lieutenant-Colonel Monson at Rampoorah, with a letter dated the 1st instant, several original letters which he had on that day intercepted, addressed by Koer Rundhere Sing, the eldest son of Raja Runjeet Sing, by others of his confidential servants, and by the above mentioned Nerunjun Lall to Jeswunt Rao Holkar, and to his confidential servants."

It is impossible to rely on the statement of Niranjana Lal implicating the Raja of Bharatpur, for it must not be forgotten that the Commander-in-Chief began his letter to the Marquess Wellesley, from which an extract has been given above, by writing,

"Having for some time past had reason to believe that a correspondence very inimical to the British interests existed between Raja Runjeet Sing, the Raja of Bhurtpore and Jeswunt Rao Holkar,"

from which it appears probable that Lake must have either coaxed or bullied Niranjana Lal or put words in his mouth to implicate the Raja of Bharatpur. The question also naturally arises, how was Lake inspired to believe the existence of a correspondence between the Raja of Bharatpur and Jaswunt Rao Holkar? Taking all these facts into consideration, we are inclined to the belief that Lake's desire to implicate the Raja of Bharatpur was based on considerations of political expediency as a set-off against the disasters that had then recently overtaken the English.

Assuming that the so-called intercepted correspondence which Lake forwarded to the Governor-General were genuine and not forgeries, there is nothing in the correspondence to show that the Raja of Bharatpur entertained hostile designs against them. The correspondence discloses the discontent and disaffection of those who had then recently come under the rule of the English. They at first owed allegiance to Sindhia, but now

they discovered that the new government under which they were placed, was altogether unsuited to them and hence they were anxious to throw off the yoke.

The correspondence also reveals the intrigues of Holkar with the inhabitants of Hindustan owing allegiance to the British and also with the ministers and subjects of the Raja of Bharatpur. In this there was nothing extraordinary. No surprise need be felt at this. The British should have considered the tactics of Holkar as a compliment to them, since imitation is the best form of flattery, and Holkar was imitating them in this respect. He was trying to take advantage of the discontent and disaffection of those who had come under their rule.

Lake, as has been so often said before, was a 'truculent ruffian.' It did not take long for the inhabitants of the Doab or the valley lying between the Ganges and the Jumna, who had lately been the subjects of Sindhia, to find out Lake's character. The Commander-in-Chief in lording it over the inhabitants of Hindustan, adopted methods not very dissimilar to those which had provoked rebellion in Ireland. The Marquess Wellesley had given a free hand to Lake in settling the newly acquired territories in Hindustan. The English at this time stood in need of money, so the Commander-in-Chief did not scruple to practise extortion on the inhabitants of the Doab, land revenues were enhanced to an extent which staggered and surprised even the oldest inhabitants who remembered the anarchy which at one time prevailed in the country under the rule of the latter-day degenerate Mughal Emperors at the time of the decline and downfall of the Empire. Even the barbarian invaders swooping over India left more subsistence for the natives of the country than the newly established machinery of land assessment introduced by the English. So one year's rule of the British was enough to disgust the inhabitants of Hindustan, and they naturally looked to Holkar to deliver them from the bonds of the British.

It was not only the land revenue assessment which created discontent and disaffection, but, as said before, the killing of cows in the holy city of Muttra was a thing quite abominable and revolting to the feelings of the Hindu population of Hindustan.\*

Muttra, it should be remembered, was the scene of Krishna's boyhood and youth. A little tact on the part of the English should have dictated them to pursue the policy of Akbar the Great and prohibit the killing of cows at such a place as Muttra.

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\* At Muttra, sanctified with the traditions of Krishna's attending to the cows and calves, the killing of cows was particularly objectionable to the Hindus. Regarding cow-killing, the author of 'Krishna and Krishnaism,' writes :

"Krishna's love for the brute creation in general, cows and calves in particular, is of some importance at the present day, when the cow question is convulsing the whole of Hindu-India. It is not for us to vindicate the excesses which Hindus are charged with having committed in the name of their religion, nor should we be justified in defending lawlessness or anarchy on the plea of religion or religious edicts. And if we advert to the subject at all, it is with the object of showing that veneration for the cow is not the effect of this Swami's teaching or that Sannyasi's lectures. As an important trait in Hindu character, it is as old as the Puranas. It is not the Gorakshini Sabha which has instilled such veneration into the inner nature of the Hindus, but Krishna, whose ideal is ever present before them in sleep or waking, and they strive to follow the example and precepts of their Lord."

From the intercepted correspondence, if genuine, it appears then, that the inhabitants of the Doab were intriguing with Holkar and the Raja of Bharatpur to liberate themselves from the foreign yoke. It was convenient for the Commander-in-Chief to ignore the existence of discontent and disaffection then prevalent in Hindustan. He wanted to wipe out the principality of Bharatpur so that the disaffected persons living in territories ruled by his compatriots might not find a rallying point round the Hindu Raja of that State.

While the people 'owing allegiance to the English were thus disaffected with them, the allies of the latter in India also tried to sever their connection with them. It has been said before, that for the prosecution of hostilities against Holkar, the English had greatly depended on Sindhia for assistance and help. It is questionable if the English would have undertaken the war against Holkar, had they not expected assistance from Sindhia. That prince, though defeated and vanquished by them by fraud and other discreditable means, still possessed a large army. Sindhia had been promised that, after the conquest of Holkar, a large portion of the territory of the latter would be given to him. It has been already said that he sent a contingent under Bapuji Sindhia to co-operate with the English in their war against Holkar. But after some time Sindhia seems to have been convinced that any assistance which he might render to them in their unjustifiable and wanton war upon Holkar would not redound to his credit.

But he had, moreover, many grievances against the British. In his letter to the Governor-General, Dowlat Rao Sindhia very succinctly enumerated the large number of his grievances. The systematic manner in which the Resident at his Court was insulting Dowlat Rao was, to say the least, scandalous and disgraceful.

Dowlat Rao Sindhia's letter to the Marquess Wellesley, dated 18th October, 1804, is of such historical importance, that no apology is needed for making the following extracts from it. After the war, the English should have shown a generous spirit towards their vanquished foes, but such was not their practice in India. Dowlat Rao was called upon to assist them in their unholy war on Holkar. At that time he was experiencing the most severe pecuniary embarrassment and he asked for some assistance from the British, but this was refused to him. In his letter to the Governor-General, Dowlat Rao Sindhia wrote :

"In these times of trouble and confusion my Government has sustained heavy losses, and had experienced the most severe pecuniary embarrassment, and that to enable me to collect an army, money was indispensably necessary ; that without money it was impossible to assemble an army, or to prosecute war ; that, as under the perfect union and identity of interests now subsisting between the two states, the loss and injury sustained by one must be considered to be the loss and injury of both ; if in consideration of the embarrassed state of my finances, the honourable Company's Government would, in the present crisis of affairs, grant me pecuniary assistance to the extent which might be requisite to prosecute the war, such assistance would be conformable to the dictates of that union and would therefore not be misapplied ; that if, however, there should be any hesitation about affording me such pecuniary aid, I requested that it might be given to me on loan, without interest, and the amount be afterwards deducted from the annual sum of twenty lac and fifty thousand rupees (which includes the revenues of Pergunnahs Dholpore, Baree, and others), that I am to receive from the honourable Company."

It appears that Sindhia had asked Mr. Webbe, the Resident at his Court, to represent to the Governor-General the severely embarrassed state of his finance and to grant him pecuniary assistance. It seems that the Resident treated Sindhia's request with contempt. So Sindhia wrote :

"Mr. Webbe however treated this representation with the utmost contempt, and never consented to afford the least degree of pecuniary assistance, but suffered the question to float in indecision, . .

"My friend I once believed that Mr. Webbe faithfully represented to your Excellency an account of all transactions at this Court, but now that I perceive Mr. Webbe is capable of such inattention and neglect with regard to the adoption of these desirable and necessary measures, I am satisfied that he has never made any communication to your Excellency of my reiterated proposals, counsels or advice to him in the present important crisis of affairs."

When Dowlat Rao penned the above, it should be remembered that Mr. Webbe was still alive. But when the Governor-General received the letter, Mr. Webbe was dead and gone. Under the circumstance, the Marquess out of respect to the memory of the dead Resident, who had so faithfully carried out his policy based on Machiavelian suggestions, was bound to shield the character of Mr. Webbe. But it was clear that the Governor-General could no longer count upon the support of Sindhia in the unjust and wanton war he was then waging upon Holkar.

This letter of Dowlat Rao contained many grievances and allegations against the English, some of which even the Marquess Wellesley was compelled to admit were just and not fictitious. It will be remembered that as a postscript to the despatch to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, dated 15th June, 1804, the Governor-General in Council wrote that Dowlat Rao Sindhia had "formally renounced all claim to the district of Gohud and to the fortress of Gwalior." But from Sindhia's letter it seems that he never did so; for he wrote to the Governor-General:

"After the conclusion of the two treaties his Excellency General Lake gave the countries of Gohud and Gwalior, together with the fort of the latter, to the people of the Bhootpongria. The case however is that the countries of Gohud and Gwalior, together with the fort of Gwalior, have for a long period of time been annexed to my territory. At the time of the conclusion of the peace, I delivered to the honourable Major-General Wellesley a statement, under my own seal and signature, of all the countries and forts in Hindustan which I had ceded, together with a memorandum of their names and annual value. In that statement, however, the names of the countries of Gohud and Gwalior, with the fort of the latter, were not inserted. Had I ceded those countries their names also would unquestionably have appeared in that statement. The delivery of that territory and fort to the people of Bhootpongria and their occupation of them, therefore, was in direct violation of the treaty of peace."

Thus it was not true, as intimated by the Governor-General to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, that Sindhia had 'formally renounced all claim to the district of Gohud and to the fortress of Gwalior.' The manner in which the Marquess Wellesley tried to explain the cession of the fortress of Gwalior to the Rana of Gohud was such as Sindhia could not understand or comprehend. It will be remembered that both General Wellesley and Major Malcolm were against the cession of the fortress of Gwalior to the Rana of Gohud, and that General Wellesley declared his opinion that the so-called International Law on which the Governor-General had founded his claim

regarding the disposal of Gwalior was little understood in India. So this forcible deprivation of Gwalior by the English was still ranking in the breast of Dowlut Rao.

But his letter to the Governor-General contained many other grievances and allegations against the English. Here two grievances, which were well-founded and which even the Governor-General was bound to admit were just, will be mentioned. Sindhia wrote :

"It is conditioned in the treaty, that many troops must not be stationed in the Pergunnahs of Chumarcoondah, Jaumgaum, &c. There must be only Tehseeldars, or if any samindar shall become refractory, or if any person shall excite disturbance within those Pergunnahs, the British troops (on the application of the Tehseeldars) will apply a remedy accordingly. In conformity to the obligations of treaty, Tehseeldars only have been stationed in those Pergunnahs the whole of which have been destroyed by the violence of turbulent people, and by the Bheels, and continue subject to the same depredations. Although the Tehseeldars state the circumstances to the officers commanding British troops and also to Killedar of Ahmednagar, which place is in the vicinity of those Pergunnahs, no one attends to them, nor is any attempt made to suppress these disorders, and in consequence, the whole of these Pergunnahs are one continued scene of devastation and not a trace of habitation or cultivation remains. If I propose to Mr. Webbe that I should despatch troops from hence to those Pergunnahs, he will not consent nor will he himself apply a remedy."

This was a just grievance of Sindhia. It appears to us that the Resident did not attend to it because it was the policy of the English to weaken Sindhia, by creating confusion, disorder and anarchy in his dominion. They would not allow Sindhia to afford protection to the lives and properties of his subjects, nor would they themselves "apply a remedy" to the disgraceful state of affairs that was prevalent in Sindhia's dominion.

Sindhia expressed his other grievance as follows

"In the second treaty it is provided that in consideration of the union established between the two states, the officers of the Company's troops will attend to the protection of my territories in the same manner as to the protection of the Company's. But notwithstanding Colonel Murray's coming to Ujjain, Jeswunt Rao Holkar invested the fort of Mundesoor during full two months, and plundered and laid waste the whole of that district, including that town, and in the same manner, while Colonel Murray was at Ujjain, Meer Khan, the Afghan, a partisan of Jeswunt Rao Holkar's, invested the fortress of Bhilsa and plundered the whole of that district and the town and fort which he captured, and yet no assistance or protection was afforded by the Colonel. What is to be thought of all these points which are contrary to the treaties? This however is certain, that the circumstances of this quarter are entirely unknown to your Excellency, else such a degree of procrastination on the part of the Company in fulfilling the obligations of friendship and the conditions of treaty were impossible."

It was a very just and legitimate grievance of Sindhia. But as usual, the Governor-General's reply was very tame and not to the point.

Sindhia's contingent had joined the English, but their subsequent defection and desertion are explained in a manner which throws a curious side-light on the military transactions of the English. If we are to believe Sindhia, and there is no reason why we should not credit him with truthfulness, he explains Monson's retreat before Holkar as due to the cowardice of that British officer. He writes :

"I dispatched orders to Bapoojee Scindhia and to Suddashee Rao to proceed with a force, consisting of six or seven battalions of Infantry and of ten thousand horse, to join his Excellency General Lake, accordingly those officers, notwithstanding the extreme distress of the troops under their command for their pay, in obedience to my orders, and in the hope that when they should effect a junction with the British army, his Excellency General Lake, in consequence of the union and perfect identity of the interests between the two states, would not fail to relieve their exigencies, set out for Kotah without a moment of delay, . . . . . Bapoojee Scindhia found that he could no longer sustain his troops without advancing them some money, and was absolutely compelled to dispatch Suddashee Rao with a whole body of horse and infantry in different directions to seek a subsistence, . . . About this time an action took place with Jeswunt Rao Holkar, when Colonel Monson sent a verbal message to Bapoojee Scindhia, desiring Scindhia to leave his baggage and Camp followers with the baggage, &c., of the British troops, and joining Mr. Lucan with his cavalry advanced to oppose Holkar. *Colonel Monson with the Infantry, however, remained behind.* Bapoojee Scindhia acted conformably to Colonel Monson's desire, and advancing . . . encountered the enemy, . . . The loss sustained by Bapoojee Scindhia in killed and wounded amounted to seven hundred horse, and much plunder was also committed. *Colonel Monson, without bearing any share in the action, effected his retreat in the utmost confusion with the Infantry, . . . to Kotah.* Bapoojee Scindhia joined Colonel Monson on the road with the remainder of his broken troops."

The sentences italicised in the above extracts, prove to demonstration with what cowardice Colonel Monson effected his retreat before Holkar.

Reading the above, there does not appear to be any truth in the allegation of Amir Khan mentioned in his Memoirs,\* that Monson's determination to retreat had been adopted by the treacherous advice of Bapuji Sindhia, who was in secret understanding with Jaswunt Rao. Had such been the case, had Bapuji Sindhia been at this time in secret understanding with Holkar, why should he have suffered such a terrible loss as that referred to by Dowlat Rao Sindhia, viz :

"The loss sustained by Bapuji Sindhia in killed and wounded amounted to seven hundred horse, and much plunder was also committed."

But there is no doubt that subsequently Bapuji Sindhia deserted the English and went over to and joined Holkar. This step of Bapuji is to be explained by their cowardice and also their selfishness in their safely retreating from Holkar and leaving him to bear the brunt of fighting. Moreover, his troops were clamouring for money, as their pay had been in arrears for several months. In the course of his letter to the Governor-General, Dowlat Rao, mentioning the selfishness of Monson, wrote :

"When Colonel Monson reached Kotah, he found himself unable to maintain his ground there, and withdrawing his troops accordingly from that place, crossed the Chumbul river in boats which he found ready for that purpose. Bapoojee Scindhia at the same time requested that, after crossing the river, the Colonel would allow the boats to return for the purpose of conveying his troops across the river, that they might be enabled to join him, but Colonel Monson never returned the boats. Bapoojee Scindhia, therefore, finding it impracticable to attempt to cross the river, without the assistance of the boats, took up a position close to Kotah. Holkar's army however arriving there, invested the place, and would have shortly seized the person of Bapoojee Scindhia, had not Raja Zalim Singh of Kotah sent a message to Bapoojee Scindhia, informing Bapoojee, that if he did not visit Holkar, he would inevitably lose his life, . . . . . Bapoojee Scindhia being extremely

\* Memoirs of Amir Khan translated by Mr. Prinsep, p. 215.

distressed and embarrassed by the importunities of the troops, without the least hope of receiving any pecuniary assistance from me, was compelled ostensibly to espouse the cause of Holkar."

From the above extract then, we learn the reasons which made the contingent sent by Sindhia to assist the English desert them and join Holkar.

Not only did Sindhia's contingent desert the English, but Sindhia himself seemed to assume a threatening attitude towards them. Reading between the lines of the concluding paragraphs of the letter from which extracts have been given above, there is very little doubt that at this time, Dowlat Rao meditated uniting his forces with those of Holkar and going to war with the English for the purpose of recovering some of the territories of which he had been lately deprived by them. The English also knew this; they moreover suspected a confederacy of the Raja of Berar, Sindhia, Holkar and the Raja of Bharatpur. But they frustrated this combination of the Indian chiefs and princes.

Dowlat Rao wrote to the Marquess Wellesley:

"As the war with Holkar, in consequence of the officers of your Excellency's troops thinking too lightly of it, has now run to a great length, and my territory has been exposed to a last degree of devastation, and as Mr. Webbe neither fulfils the obligations of treaty or of friendship, nor returns any answers to any plans of operations for the conduct of the war, against the enemy, and to my propositions, all which are conformable to the conditions of treaty, nor adjusts any of these points, therefore a pair of hircarrahs are sent with this letter to your Excellency, for the purpose of communicating all these circumstances, and with a view to the arrangement of the disordered state of the affairs of my Government which hitherto, in consequence of the union subsisting between the two states, I have expected from the Company's officers, and which without my moving appears impracticable, nay, without that, the state of my affairs is daily becoming worse. I have in whatever manner I was able, by loans raised funds for the provision of necessaries for my march and for collecting my troops, and on the 20th of September marched from my encampment at Boerhanpore. I have also written to all the officers of my troops to join me from every quarter, and it is my intention to raise new troops. The friendship and union subsisting between us has induced me to write your Excellency all circumstances past, present, and to come.

..... As Mr. Webbe, who resides with me on the part of your Excellency, practises delay and evasion in every point, and avoids the advance of money in the form of pecuniary aid, of a loan or on account of that which is clearly and justly due by the conditions of treaty, I have deemed it necessary to communicate all circumstances to your Excellency."

The concluding paragraph of this letter shows that Sindhia at this time meditated recovering his lost possessions from the English. So he wrote:

"My determined resolution now is, after having collected a numerous army, consisting both of old troops and new levies, to proceed to chastise the enemy; for how can I be content to see a territory, which for a long time has been in my possession, and in the conquest of which crores of rupees have been expended and great battles have been fought, in the possession of another! It is no very difficult matter to wrest the territory from the hands of the enemy. Nothing else is necessary but the open and cordial support of friends."

If language has any meaning, it meant that Sindhia did not consider it a 'very difficult matter to wrest the territory from the hands of the' English. But before this letter reached the Governor-General, Mr. Webbe was dead. Mr. Jenkins had succeeded him. As Sindhia did not fare any better at his hands, to attract attention and to get



his grievances redressed, he was obliged to incarcerate this resident, It must be admitted that this act of Sindhia was against every received principle of the law of nations, though there were many extenuating circumstances.

Thus then the situation of the English in India was extremely critical. They had met with defeats and disasters from Holkar. The inhabitants of the territories which they had wrested from Sindhia were plotting to bring about their ruin. They had looked up to Sindhia for help; but that prince had been quite disenchanted of the English. The ill-treatment and studied insults and slights which he had received at their hands, especially at the hands of the residents at his Court, made him determined to sever the alliance with them.

The other non-Christian allies also could not be depended upon or trusted for help at this critical hour. The Raja of Berar was suspected of meditating war on the English. The Commander-in-Chief and his protege Monson discovered that the Raja of Bharatpur, his ministers and subjects were encouraging and assisting Holkar to hold out and overthrow the English.

Whenever the English looked round, the prospect appeared very gloomy for them, their state of affairs in India was extremely critical. How they managed to get out of the mesh which they had themselves woven will now be narrated.

The Marquess Wellesley clearly discerned the fact that it was around Holkar that all his disaffected and discontented allies and dependants were rallying: and that political expediency necessitated that Holkar should be crushed at all cost. To crush that Maratha chieftain, the Governor-General, however, did not rely on force alone. He knew that the sword alone would not succeed. Something more than mere force, something other than the sword, was necessary to vanquish Holkar. That something was *fraud*. The Governor-General advocated and opened a campaign of intrigues against Holkar.

Lake was for waging war against the Raja of Bharatpur and wiping out his principality from the map of India. But such was not the view of the Governor-General. In his letter to Lake, dated August 22, 1804, the Marquess Wellesley wrote:

"I therefore hereby authorise and direct your Excellency to assure the Raja of Bhurtpore in the most distinct terms, of the determination of the British Government to discharge all the obligations of the existing treaty with him in the most strict and punctual manner, to apprise the Raja of the falsehood and wickedness of the imputations alleged against the British Government, respecting a supposed design of violating that treaty by any interference in the Raja's internal Government, or by any attempt to subject his territories, forts, or garrisons, to the Civil or Criminal jurisdiction of the Company's Courts, or to interpose the authority of the Company in any manner whatever in his Civil or Military Government, or in any manner whatever to depart from the terms of the subsisting treaty."

Thus the Governor-General desired to conciliate the Raja of Bharatpur, and, if possible, to alienate him from Holkar. But towards the latter, the Marquess Wellesley was not inclined to show any mercy. In his 'most secret and confidential' letter to the Commander-in-Chief, dated 28th July, 1804, the Governor-General wrote:

"No expectation can be entertained of any accommodation with Holkar as long as he shall

remain in any degree of force. In the actual situation of affairs, a defensive war on our part would be attended with the most serious consequences to our reputation and interests."

Again,

"Although the Governor-General is desirous of concluding an amicable arrangement with Holkar, on the basis of his instructions to the Resident with Scindhia, the principal object of the Commander-in-Chief will be directed to the means of making an early and vigorous attack on the resources of Holkar and of entirely reducing his power, if that measure should become necessary. Holkar must be made sensible of the superiority of our strength, before he will submit to the terms on which alone he can be safely admitted to the protection of the British power."

Even after penning the above, the Governor-General had the mortification and humiliation to see the English defeated by Holkar. The disasters which befell Monson were yet to come. And when he was acquainted with the nature of those disasters, the Governor-General advocated a campaign of intrigues against Holkar, for he knew fully that the English would not be able to overcome that Maratha Chieftain by means of force alone. So on the 17th August, 1804, the Marquess Wellesley wrote a 'private' letter to Lake, transmitting 'notes upon the present state of affairs with Holkar', and also wished to receive Lake's 'sentiments upon these previously to the transmission of any official despatch.'

The Marquess Wellesley began his Notes marked 'A' as follows :

"Since the date of my last notes, it appears that Colonel Monson's detachment has retired altogether from Malwah with loss of guns, camp equipage, &c., and in great distress."

In these notes, the Governor-General sketched out the plan of campaign against Holkar. But he chiefly relied on *intrigues*, as will be evident from the following extracts :

"Holkar's army is not paid, it depends for its subsistence entirely upon plunder, and its means must be very precarious.

"No principle of union can exist in such a body as that commanded by Holkar. The Pathans and Mussalmans can have no attachment to Holkar, and most probably have no knowledge of each other, and the whole force must have collected about Holkar as a chief of note, and with the sole object of gaining a subsistence."

Reading the above there can be no doubt that the Marquess Wellesley implied that the Pathans and Musalmans in the employ of Holkar should be bought over by means of specious, smooth and false promises and intrigues.

After writing the above, the Governor-General was informed of the final retreat of Monson to Agra. So he wrote to Lake on 11th September, 1804 :

"you will also take every step for confirming our allies, and for encouraging desertion from Holkar by renewing the proclamations of last year, or by other encouragements."

This advice of the Governor-General to the Commander-in-Chief was something like putting the cart before the horse, since Lake had been already encouraging desertion from Holkar. In reply to the above letter, the Commander-in-Chief wrote on the 22nd September, 1804 :

"His (Holkar's) troops are in a strange state, some of them are again making proposals to come over, they shall be received if they come, but I have little faith in anything they say, *however, any-*

*thing like disaffection among them has its weight and may be of use, therefore it shall be encouraged."*

The words put in italics in the above bring out in bold relief the intriguing nature of the Commander-in-Chief.

If Holkar was openly hostile to the English the latter were suspicious of Sindhia, because of the wrongs they had inflicted on him and so their guilty consciences were uneasy. Latterly, Sindhia had also assumed a threatening attitude towards them. Sindhia, although subdued, was not yet thoroughly crushed. Since the English were suspicious of him, it was necessary to intrigue with his officers and men. All his foreign servants had been bribed and tempted to betray their master. That was how the English obtained their victories over Sindhia. The latter, however, had another traitor in his Camp. His name was Jean Baptiste. It would have been better for Sindhia had he got rid of this servant of his. But for some reasons which remain unexplained, he still kept in his pay and maintained in his service, this half-caste. The Commander-in-Chief opened intrigues with him. In his 'private' letter to the Marquess Wellesley, dated Agra 22nd September, 1804, Lake wrote:

"Jean Baptiste would join him (*i.e.*, Colonel Murray), but cannot move from his present situation for want of subsistence for his troops. He is desirous of coming to me but requires a lac and-a-half of rupees to pay his troops. He is reported to be a good and fair man, and by what I have seen of him lately from his correspondence. has every appearance of being so, but I must be more convinced that he is so before I give him money, at any rate not to that extent, if he does anything worth notice it will be time enough to pay him then."

Thus it is evident that the English were carrying on intrigues with Jean Baptiste. It will be mentioned later on that Sindhia, although willing to co-operate with Holkar against the English, was unable to do so. The reason of his inability was understood by Holkar, who knew that Sindhia's inability was caused by the treachery of Jean Baptiste, and that such was the fact we have the documentary evidence of Lake himself to prove. Although on Holkar's representation, Jean Baptiste was placed under arrest by Sindhia, yet there was no direct evidence then to convict this man of treachery. But of this there is no doubt now.

In both the extension and consolidation of the power of the English in India, the Sikhs have played a very important part. In the war of the English against Sindhia, we have already mentioned how intrigues had been set on foot with the Sikhs by the former. The Sikhs were prevailed upon to remain neutral.

On the present occasion, also, the English saw the possibility of the Sikhs rendering assistance to Holkar. To prevent this, the English opened intrigues with them. On the 10th September, 1804, the Marquess Wellesley sent an "official and secret" letter to Lake. He began his letter as follows:

"I have the honor to transmit enclosed, for your Excellency's notice, an extract from a letter from Mr. A. Seton, the Governor-General's Agent at Bareilly, on the subject of the overtures received from a chieftain of the tribe of Sikhs, named Dolcha Sing, for establishing a connection with the British power.

Your Excellency will observe, from the information contained in that letter, that Dolcha Sing is

desirous of being subsidized by the British Government, and that proposals to that effect may be expected from him.

*"It is possible that the services of this Chieftain may eventually be employed with effect in contributing to the protection of the Doab from the incursions of the predatory horse, when the river Jumna shall become fordable. I deem it advisable, therefore, to authorize your Excellency, if you should think proper, to subsidize Dolcha Sing, during the war. . . ."*

The sentences put in italics in the above extract clearly indicate the nature of the intrigues which the English had been carrying on with the Sikhs. The letter from Mr. A. Seton is not published among the Despatches of the Marquess Wellesley, so we can only conjecture the nature of Dolcha Singh's proposals from the Governor-General's letter, an extract from which has been given above.

Such was the campaign of intrigues and conspiracies opened by the English to gain their purpose. If ultimately Holkar did not succeed in getting the better of the English, it was not due to any want of valor or courage on his part, it was not that he lacked in any qualities which go to make a valiant soldier or a distinguished general, but his failure was due mostly to the net of intrigues and conspiracies which had been woven around him. The servants of the Company had raised traitors in his camp and they did not scruple to act on the maxims and suggestions of Machiavelli in gaining their selfish ends.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### HOLKAR'S MOVEMENTS.

After the retreat of Monson, Holkar thought that he would be able to sweep everything before him, and there was nothing improbable in his doing so, since the troops under the leadership of British officers had been very ignominiously beaten by him, and seemed to have been thoroughly demoralized. Notwithstanding all the precautions which the English had taken (and which will be referred to presently) to prevent the advance of Holkar, the latter experienced no difficulty in crossing into the territories then under their rule. It was merely a matter of walk over for Holkar to have come and occupied Muttra.

The situation of the English seemed hopeless and so they set afoot intrigues and conspiracies which have been already related in the last chapter. But although they had been intriguing and conspiring against Holkar since a very long time past, still it was a wonder to them that Holkar should have been able to collect any army at all and successfully resist, nay, defeat them. Writing on the 24th March, 1805, to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, the Governor-General in Council said :

"The Governor-General in Council is not yet sufficiently informed with regard to the detail of transactions and events in the southern and western provinces of Hindustan, which immediately followed the retreat of Jeswant Rao Holkar, to be able to explain, with accuracy and precision, the means by which Jeswunt Rao Holkar was enabled to considerably augment the number, and to revive the spirit of his troops, notwithstanding the precipitation of his flight, the real distress of his army, and the apparently desperate condition of his affairs. The investigation of the conduct and movements of the British detachments employed against the army of Jeswunt Rao Holkar may be expected to elucidate this subject and to afford the means of explaining in a satisfactory manner the causes of that change in the situation of affairs which produced the necessity of adopting a system of measures and arrangements entirely different from those by which the Governor-General in Council confidently hoped to accomplish the effectual reduction of the power of Jeswunt Rao Holkar."

From the published records, however, it does not appear that any investigation as to the means by which Jeswunt Rao was enabled to considerably augment the number and to revive the spirit of his troops was ever made. But we think that Holkar's success in augmenting the number of his troops was mainly due to the fact that the people living under the English had become so much disgusted with them that they looked upon Holkar as their deliverer from their bondage, and accordingly joined his standard.

Very extensive military preparations were made to defend the territories of India then under the rule of the Company against the threatened invasion of Holkar. In the despatch of the 24th March, 1805, of the Governor-General in Council to the Secret Committee, it is stated :

"It appeared to the Governor-General to be proper that a detachment should be stationed in the neighbourhood of the passes into the British territories in Hindustan, at some position between Agra

and Delhi, for the purposes of defending those passes, and that detachment should be of sufficient strength, both to preserve tranquillity in those territories, and to defeat any part of Holkar's force which might pass in the rear of the Commander-in-Chief. The Governor-General observed, that a detachment thus formed and posted, might act as a body of reserve to the army of the Commander-in-Chief and might be strengthened from the garrisons of Agra, Delhi, Muttra, and other places.

"The defence of Delhi against an attack from the enemy was stated to the Commander-in-Chief to be an object of the greatest importance."

Not only were all the territories thus securely defended, but a net, as it were, was drawn round Holkar and it was confidently expected that that Maratha chief would be very easily quarried. Writing to the Secret Committee on the 24th March 1805, the Governor-General in Council observed :

"It appeared to be desirable that the subsidiary force for Dowlut Rao Scindhia should be prepared in Hindustan, and should form a part of the army of the Commander-in-Chief, and on his Excellency's advance into Malwa, should march to Ougein to remain in that position prepared to act as the events of the campaign might render advisable. According to this plan, Holkar would have been placed between five separate British armies :

1st—The army under the personal command of the Commander-in-Chief.

2nd—The detachment to be posted between Delhi and Agra, near the passes.

3rd—The detachment in Bundelkhand.

4th—The subsidiary force to be stationed at Ougein.

5th—The corps under the command of Colonel Murray to be posted on the frontier of Guzerat.

"It appeared to be highly improbable that Holkar should be able to evade the attack of all these detachments, and it was the Governor-General's decided opinion that the proposed plan of operations was preferable to any system merely defensive.

"The speedy conclusion of the war appeared to be of the highest importance in every view of the question, and a vigorous and early attack on the enemy's main force offered the fairest prospect of such a result."

Notwithstanding all these precautions, Holkar succeeded in invading the territory of the Company. In their expectation of the speedy conclusion of the war, the English were sorely disappointed. In a previous chapter, we expressed our opinion that Jaswunt Rao was not a statesman, that he played into the hands of the unscrupulous servants of the Company and was the cause of all the troubles which befell the Maratha nation. But for his attack on Puna, the Peshwa would not have fled from his capital and signed the Treaty of Bassein, which brought about the Second Maratha War together with the loss of independence of the Marathas. But now Holkar seemed to have repented for his conduct. Although he did not show much statesmanship, the generalship exhibited by him was of a very high order. He outmanœuvred and out-generalled the English. Not only had he inflicted severe losses on Monson, but the manner in which he evaded the net that had been drawn round him by the English and invaded their possessions in Hindustan, spoke very highly of his knowledge of military tactics.

The English knew that in a fair fight they would not be able to overcome Holkar. And as according to their saying that in love and war everything is justifiable, they began intriguing against him, and also by holding out temptations tried to raise traitors in his camp. They encouraged among Holkar's troops a spirit of desertion.

A guilty conscience does not know what tranquility and peace of mind mean, and is consequently never happy. The Company's Government of India of those days were very uneasy on account of their guilty conscience. They smelt danger where it is questionable if any had existed. It was supposed that the successes which Holkar had won, encouraged the Maratha princes to combine again and recover some of their possessions of which they had been very unrighteously deprived in the previous year. Of all the independent Maratha princes, the Raja of Berar was the weakest. The sin of the father is visited on the son. The immediate predecessor of the Berar Raja had greatly helped the English in getting a footing in India, and it has already been narrated how they repaid his successor. Now that they had met with nothing but disasters and defeats from Holkar, it was political expediency to show to the world that they could beat some persons. These persons were chosen to be the Raja of Bharatpur and the Raja of Berar, because both these princes were considered to be very weak and their resources very insignificant compared with those of the Company.

It was one of the Christian kings named Olaf who chanted centuries ago :

"Force rules the world. Has ruled it, will rule it.  
Meekness is weakness. Force is triumphant."

By the manner in which the Raja of Bharatpur had submitted to the dictates of the English without even the show of resistance, it was certain that he was not a powerful prince. Accordingly they thought that they would be able to crush him very easily.

The Second Maratha War brought out in bold relief the weak points in the military organization of the Raja of Berar. When the English discovered the weakness of that prince, they deprived him of all his fertile provinces and reduced his power and resources to an extent which made him quite helpless and incapable of ever raising even his little finger against them. The latter, knowing the weakness and helplessness of the Berar Raja, thought it a good policy to altogether wipe out his independent state from the map of India. He was accused of harbouring designs against them, which it is very questionable that he ever did. But whether he did so or not, the English were bent upon humiliating him at all costs. In reviewing the whole transactions after the lapse of a century, it is impossible for any impartial and unprejudiced historian not to condemn, in the strongest language possible, the manner in which the English treated the Raja of Berar. In the despatch of the Secret Committee dated 24th March, 1805, the Governor-General in Council wrote :

"The Governor-General deemed it expedient to issue instructions to the Resident at Nagpore, directing him to take a proper opportunity of apprizing the Raja of Berar in *the most public manner* of the information which the British Government had received with regard to his proceeding *that the Governor-General had deemed it necessary, without awaiting any explanation to make preparatory arrangements for the eventual purpose of repelling aggression and punishing treachery on the part of the Raja*; that accordingly Major-General Wellesley had returned to the army of the Deccan, with orders to march directly to Nagpore in the event of any unquestionable indication which the Raja might manifest of a design to commit acts of hostility against the British Government or its allies, or of any proceedings of the Raja in favour of our enemies. That the Governor-General was also prepared to take further measures for the just

punishment of the Raja of Berar in such an event, . . . the Governor-General resolved to call forth the whole power and resources of the Company against a state so devoid of every principle of good faith, and not to desist until the Government of the Raja should have been effectually reduced."

From the words put in italics in the above, it is evident that the Governor-General was bent on encompassing the ruin of the Raja of Berar and even lacked the decency, not to say the courtesy, of enquiring into the correctness of the charge of hostile designs on the part of the Raja. The Marquess Wellesley considered it a matter of political expediency to totally crush the Raja, but he was an expert dissembler of more than common Western dissimulation. His instructions to the Resident at Nagpur conclusively prove his perfidious nature and intriguing spirit. In writing to the Secret Committee on the 24th March, 1805, he said :

"The Resident, however, was directed to suspend these representations until he should have learned the result of the Commander-in Chief's first operations against Holkar, unless circumstances should render an immediate statement of them useful and necessary.

*"The Resident was at the same time instructed to assure the Raja of the most amicable disposition of the British Government towards him while he should continue to abide by his engagements under the late peace, &c., &c."*

The above sentences, and especially those put in italics, show the hypocritical manner in which the Governor-General tried to deal with the Raja. While he professed 'the most amicable disposition' towards the Raja, he was, at the same time, devising means and schemes to cut his throat. He was only biding his time to do so.

That the English had wronged the Raja, they believed in their heart of hearts. So with their guilty consciences, they presumed that the Raja had been plotting against them. The Governor-General in Council, in the despatch under reference, mentioned the nature of the Raja's grievances against the English :

"It manifestly appeared not merely by the Raja's rejection of those beneficial articles, but by the general tenor of his declarations and those of his ministers, that the Raja still considered the alienation of the provinces in question to be an act of injustice and a violation of faith on the part of the British Government."

The Raja of Berar was weak and therefore the servants of the Company did not scruple to freely bleed him. The Resident at the Court of the Berar Raja was a native of Scotland named Mountstuart Elphinstone. We shall have occasion to say a great deal regarding him in another place. It is only proper here to say that, breathing the atmosphere of the corrupt political school of the Wellesleys, he could not have been expected to show much consideration for the independent princes of India, for it was the creed of the politicians and statesmen of those days to use fraud and force to overawe and deprive Indian princes of their independence and worldly possessions. Elphinstone rose to eminence by becoming a votary of that creed. The manner in which he bullied and badgered the Raja of Berar can hardly be regarded as a matter of credit either to him or to the Christian government which employed him.

It will take long to narrate the manner in which the Resident persecuted and annoyed the Raja of Berar. The Governor-General in Council in the despatch to the Secret Committee referred to above took pride in mentioning the doings of the Resident. The Raja of Berar was weak and so he had to put up with the humiliation to which



he was subjected. But it was fortunate for him that Holkar was not yet vanquished. Had it been so, there is no doubt that this principality would have been then wiped out of the map of India.

Although greater danger was to be apprehended from Sindhia, yet the policy pursued towards him was of a totally different nature from that adopted towards the Raja of Berar. This was solely to be attributed to the fact that Sindhia was more formidable than, and not so weak as, the Raja of Berar.

Upon the cowardly retreat of Monson to Agra, Jaswunt Rao, as said before, advanced triumphantly with his army and took possession of Muttra. That he succeeded in doing so, notwithstanding the large garrison which the British had thrown in there, shows that the troops under the command of the British officers had been thrown into confusion and alarm at his approach. Muttra was abandoned at his approach.

It does not appear that Holkar had any designs at this time upon the territories of the Company in Hindustan. The sacred city of the Hindus had been polluted by the Christians, allowing that very useful animal, the cow, to be butchered within its walls. Having delivered the sacred city from the hands of the English, he thought that his task had been done. The reconquest of, and expulsion of the British from Hindustan was at this time far from his mind. Had he been so inclined, he could have as easily occupied Delhi as he had done Muttra.

It seems to us that Holkar stayed at Muttra to mature plans for the recovery of his dominions, for it was known to him that Colonel Murray from the side of Guzerat and Colonel Wallace from Deccan had been advancing on his possessions in Malwa and the Deccan respectively.

Colonel Murray, although at one time, that is on the 1st of July, he commenced his retreat towards the Myhee, and thus did not join Monson, was, as soon as Holkar had proceeded towards Hindustan, busily engaged in intriguing, and also advancing on to Holkar's dominions. From the Despatch of the Governor-General in Council to the Secret Committee dated 24th March, 1805, it would seem that Colonel Murray had been engaged in encouraging desertion among the adherents of Jaswunt Rao.

Although the Governor-General in Council did not authorize Colonel Murray to encourage desertion among the adherents of Holkar, it is more than probable that that officer must have done so by means of smooth, specious and false promises to gain his ends. For on no other hypothesis, can his success in capturing all the possessions of Holkar in Malwa without fighting any battles, be reasonably explained. That English officers could *successfully* encourage treachery and desertion shows the foolishness, degeneracy and absence of patriotism of considerable numbers of Indians.

On the 5th July, 1804, Colonel Murray resumed his march towards Ujjain, at which city he arrived on the 8th of the same month without having encountered any opposition. The Governor-General in Council wrote to the Secret Committee, on the 24th March, 1805, that,

"During the continuance of Colonel Murray's detachment at Ujjain, that officer took possession *without any resistance*, of the whole of the territory in the occupation of Jeswunt Rao Holkar, situated in that quarter, and of Indore, the capital of the possessions of the family."

From the words which have been put in italics above, it seems to us evident that Colonel Murray must have encouraged desertion among the adherents of Jeswant Rao and thus succeeded in occupying that Chief's possessions without encountering any resistance.

Wallace, who had been left in command of the British forces in the Deccan on the departure of General Wellesley for Calcutta, marched from Puna on the 22nd of August. He crossed the Godavery with his infantry at Paithan, about the 18th of September and on the 27th was joined at Forkabad by Colonel Haliburton, whose march, as well as that of Colonel Wallace, had been impeded by the severity of the weather: and on the 30th Wallace was joined by his cavalry, which proceeded higher up the Godavery than Paithan in search of a ford.

Early in the month of October, the Peshwa's contingent joined Wallace. During the course of that month, Chandor was captured as well as several other forts belonging to Holkar in the Deccan. The possession of these forts by the English deprived Holkar of all his possessions to the southward of the Tapti.

Although Holkar was pursuing a career of conquest in Northern India he felt the loss of all his possessions in Malwa and the Deccan. His long stay in Muttra must have been occasioned by his devising plans and making preparations for the recovery of his lost possessions. At the time when he meditated hostilities with the English, he had sent an agent to the Resident at Puna who wished to be informed whether the British Government would receive proposals of accommodation from Holkar. The Resident at Puna, at this time, was Colonel Close, to whom the agent delivered a letter from Holkar, addressed to the Governor-General, but evidently intended for General Wellesley, in which Holkar asserted that he was compelled by the aggressions of Lake to have recourse to arms, and attempted to vindicate his conduct in his intercourse with the British Government.

It was this vindictive spirit of the servants of the Company which led Holkar to solicit the co-operation of Sindhia, the Raja of Berar and the Raja of Bharatpur. With their characteristic short memory, forgetting the obligations they owed to Holkar and lacking in gratitude, the servants of the Company were plotting for his destruction. The stay of Holkar at Muttra seems to have been due to his efforts there for devising means to counteract their plot. But he was unfortunate in all his undertakings. The English took advantage of his stay at Muttra by spreading reports of his destitute condition, which reports were calculated to encourage desertion among his adherents and thus reduce his power of resistance.

While Holkar was resting his wearied limbs in Muttra, Lake was actively engaged in making preparations to attack and annihilate him. He marched from Cawnpur on the 3rd, arrived at Agra on the 22nd of September, and, assembling his army at Sikandra, marched on the 1st of October towards Muttra. As the Commander-in-Chief's army approached Muttra, Holkar retired towards Delhi with the intention, no doubt, of capturing it and with it the person of the Mughal Emperor. But ever since the capture of that Imperial city by Lake, it had been very strongly garrisoned by troops under

the command of British officers as a safeguard against surprises. Extra vigilance was exercised when the presence of Holkar in the Doab, and especially his stay in Muttra, was known. The officer who was at this time holding the command of Delhi was Colonel Ochterlony. As was customary with the English residents in India of those days, this officer maintained a seraglio consisting of women of very questionable morals. Very many Europeans in those days most promiscuously led immoral lives. But having native women of low or no morals gave them the advantage of learning the language, and becoming acquainted with the views and opinions of the people of the country. It was thus political considerations which prompted these Europeans in keeping harems. These harems were the centres of intrigues. It was absolutely necessary for the English who were then trying to establish their power in India to be well supplied with spies—and female spies, if clever, were of much more service than those of the male sex. They have more tact. They have better opportunities of worming men's and women's secrets out of them. The influence which Ochterlony wielded in Delhi was greatly to be attributed to the women he had in his keep, who, possessing an access to the Zenana of the Mugal Emperor, and of other notabilities, kept him informed of all the gossip and news of that Imperial city as well as of Court intrigues.

Although the Emperor had been released from the guardianship of the Marathas, the Company had not as yet made any arrangement respecting the maintenance of him and his family. The mind of the Emperor was fed with hopes, and at that time, when Holkar marched towards Delhi, there can be no doubt that the Emperor threw all the influence he possessed on the side of the English. It was no wonder then that Holkar did not succeed in capturing Delhi.

When Holkar did not succeed in capturing Delhi, and when he knew that Lake was on full march in his rear from Muttra, he retreated towards Saharanpur. He had hoped assistance from and co-operation of the chieftains who ruled in that part of the country. But he was bitterly disappointed in all these hopes. It will be remembered that the Governor-General had authorised Lake to intrigue with that Sikh chieftain Dolcha Singh, as well as with Bambu Khan, the Begam Samru and other petty chieftains residing in and about Saharanpur. Such being the case, it was not possible for Holkar to succeed against the British.

It is not necessary to mention in detail the battles which took place between the armies of Holkar and of the British after Holkar retreated from Delhi. The Commander-in-Chief arrived at Delhi on the 17th October, two days after Holkar's retreat. Holkar, not finding any support from the chieftains of the country of Saharanpur, retreated towards the territory of the Raja of Bharatpur, from whom as a Hindu, he, as a refugee and in distress, expected treatment according to the laws of hospitality. The Commander-in-Chief with the troops under his command did not cease pursuing him and fought several battles, preliminary to that of Dig and the siege of Bharatpur, which will be narrated in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### THE SIEGE OF BHARATPUR

Colonel Burn was detached to pursue Holkar on his retreat from Delhi. This officer had been commanding Saharanpur, but had been recalled to the defence of Delhi. He left Delhi and crossed the Jumna on the 26th of October. Although he was in close proximity of Holkar's troops, there was no fighting. In the meanwhile, Holkar discovering the fact that he could not obtain any help from the chieftains of Saharanpur commenced his march towards the territory of the Raja of Bharatpur, where he expected to find an asylum. It was not Burn alone who was in pursuit of Holkar, but the Commander-in-Chief in person set out to pursue him. On the 31st of October, Lake, with his three regiments of Dragoons, three regiments of native cavalry, and the mounted artillery, crossed the Jumna to pursue the cavalry of Holkar. At the same time General Fraser, with the main body of the infantry, two regiments of native cavalry and the park of artillery, was directed to move upon the infantry and artillery of Holkar, which had reached the neighbourhood of Dig, in the territory of the Raja of Bharatpur.

"The object of this double movement was," writes Mr. Mill (vi. p. 416), "to force both the cavalry and the infantry of Holkar to risk an action with the British troops, or to make him fly from Hindustan, under circumstances of so much ignominy and distress, as would have a disastrous effect upon the reputation of his cause."

At this time Holkar was encamping in a place called Shamli; here Lake arrived on the 3rd November, on whose approach Holkar marched in a southerly direction with the intention of retiring into the territory of the Raja of Bharatpur.

General Fraser marched from Delhi on the 5th of November in pursuit of Holkar's infantry and arrived in the neighbourhood of Dig on the 12th November. On the following day, that is, on the 13th, a battle was fought between Holkar's and the troops under the command of Fraser. It was a very dearly bought victory for the English. Holkar's pieces of ordnance fell into the hands of Fraser's troops. The Maratha army, now vanquished and defeated, had to take refuge in the fort of Dig. Fraser fell mortally wounded in the battle and so the command devolved on Monson. The loss of the British was severe; no less than 643 were killed and wounded and of these 22 were British officers. It is impossible to correctly estimate Holkar's loss. According to the statement of the English writers, Holkar is said to have lost 2000 men and 87 pieces of ordnance.

Lake was in pursuit of Holkar's cavalry, whom he surprised and encountered at Farrukhabad on the 17th November. It is said that Lake had, from the 31st October, marched at the rate of 23 miles daily. Although he surprised Holkar, he was not able to either capture him or annihilate his cavalry. It is said that the explosion of a tumbril, as the British troops approached the Maratha camp, gave the alarm to

Holkar, and he fled with his followers to Dig. Again we find Holkar out-manoœvring and out-generalling the Commander-in-Chief, for we fail to understand, that had Lake shown military tactics of a very high order, how he could have allowed Holkar to escape to Dig. Even in his pursuit of Holkar, he was unable to overtake him. Of course, Holkar was suprised and his camp was thrown into confusion, but the manner in which he eluded the pursuit of, and escaped capture by the English shows that he understood the art of warfare better than the Commander-in-Chief.

At Dig the infantry of Holkar had been defeated by the forces under the command of General Fraser. Holkar was not present there in person.

The British were now very jubilant. The objects for which the war had been undertaken by them were now accomplished. In their usual pompous style, the Governor-General as well as the Commander-in-Chief proclaimed to the world the victories they had obtained over Holkar's forces.

But all the mutual congratulations of the two self-sufficient persons were premature. The affairs of the 13th and 17th November, 1804, did not end the war or enable the Governor-General to place the peace of India on a secure basis. The escape of Holkar was not considered an event of much consequence by the Commander-in-Chief. But Holkar's flight was a turning point in the History of the Rise of the Power of the Christians in India, for it was pregnant with consequences which were highly beneficial to the Indians. The Governor-General fully realized the danger of Holkar's escape. So he wrote to the Commander-in-Chief :

"It is unfortunate that Holkar's person should have escaped you ; you are equally impressed with me by the absolute necessity of seizing or destroying him. Until his person be either destroyed or imprisoned, we shall have no rest. I therefore rely on you to permit no circumstance to divert you from pursuing him to the utmost extremity."

Dig, as said before, is in the territory of the Raja of Bharatpur. It was here that Holkar with his cavalry and infantry found shelter. The Raja of Bharatpur had concluded an alliance with the Christian Government of India and so his affording protection to Holkar was looked upon by them as a piece of treachery. But if we carefully and impartially analyse the conduct of the Raja, we shall be obliged to absolve him from the charge of treachery levelled against him by the English writers of Indian History. Although the Raja had been well-treated for the services he had rendered to the British during their war with Sindhia, he had reasons to be alarmed at their high-handed proceedings. Mill writes :\*

"Offence appeared to have been taken by the Raja at the violent manner in which the British resident at Muttra had decided some disputes respecting the traffic in salt ; and some alarm was conveyed to his mind by a report that the English Government was to introduce the English Courts of justice into his dominions."

H. H. Willson, as a footnote to the above, adds :

"Another cause seems to have been a religious feeling. The letters of the agent repeatedly allude to the Raja's horror at the cow-killing propensities of the infidel English."

Although it is probable that the Raja did not at first entertain any hostile designs against the British government, the conduct of the latter towards him, obliged him, it seems, to throw in his lot with that of Holkar. In that he considered his safety lay.

Unfortunately the Governor-General had entrusted the negotiations with the Raja of Bharatpur to the hands of Lake. After the perusal of all the despatches written to the Governor-General by the latter there is little room for doubting the fact that the Commander-in-Chief was bent upon war with the Raja of Bharatpur. Moreover the manner in which the Raja was being bullied by the Britishers was such as no one possessing the least grain of self-respect in him would tamely submit to. He was not given an opportunity to explain his conduct, but placing implicit confidence in the genuineness of the intercepted correspondence, the English concluded that the Raja had been guilty of treachery and tried to interfere in his state concerns. On the 24th March, 1805, the Governor-General in Council wrote to the Secret Committee of the East India Company, regarding the proceedings which had been adopted towards the Raja of Bharatpur :

"The Commander-in-Chief was desired at the same time to communicate to Rajah Runjit Sing, copies of all the intercepted letters addressed to Jeswunt Rao Holkar, under the seals of the Raja and his son, to warn the Raja of the ruin in which he and his family would inevitably be involved by the continuance of the detected intercourse between the State of Bhurtpore and Jeswunt Rao Holkar, and to require the Raja and his family to relinquish all communication with Holkar, and every other enemy of the British Government under pain of being considered and treated as a public enemy.

"The Commander-in-Chief was also directed to apprise the Raja of his determination to seize and bring to justice all the agents concerned in his traitorous correspondence wherever they might be found, and to inform him that the indulgence and consideration which had been manifested towards him and his son, would not be extended to the inferior of the conspiracy, and the Commander-in-Chief was accordingly directed to proceed without delay, to seize all the agents and instruments of this conspiracy, although they should take refuge within the territories of our allies and dependants, and particularly to seize all those who might remain within the territory of Bhurtpore, informing the Raja that the British Government was resolved not to admit of any asylum for criminals of this description.

"In conformity to the spirit of this communication, the Commander-in-Chief was authorized and directed to bring to trial before a court martial, all persons concerned in the conspiracy who might be arrested within the territories of our allies, or dependents, and in such parts of our possessions as might not have been rendered subject to the laws and regulations of the British Government, and to inflict such punishment as might be awarded by the court martial."

Now, the instruction which the Governor-General issued to the Commander-in-Chief were not such as to allay the apprehensions of the Raja of Bharatpur regarding the ulterior designs of the English upon his independence and upon his dominion. As said before, the Raja was not given an opportunity to explain his conduct. He was not even asked to co-operate with the English in suppressing the conspiracy. On the contrary, he was ordered to hand over those suspected of conspiracy to the latter for trial. This peremptory demand of the Governor-General touched the most susceptible part of the Raja. Of course, the Christian Europeans do not understand the laws of hospitality as observed and practised by non-Christian Asiatics. No true Oriental would

hand over to justice even the vilest criminal who comes as a refugee and seeks his protection. Such being the case, it was altogether out of the question that the Raja would deliver into the hands of the English those of his subjects whom they suspected of conspiracy. Moreover, a step like this would have lowered the prestige of the Raja in the eyes of all his subjects.

In self-defence the Raja had to do something to counteract the humiliation which the English were proposing to subject him to. No surprise need be felt, therefore, if he rendered assistance to Holkar, since that Maratha prince was being looked upon as the deliverer of India from the yoke of the foreigners.

Although the Marquess Wellesley was not much in favour of going to war with the Raja of Bharatpur. Lake was of a different opinion. Like a blood-thirsty hound, the Commander-in-Chief delighted in the sight of bloodshed. On the 27th November, 1804, in a letter marked 'Private,' Lake wrote to the Marquess Wellesley:

*"I last night received the notes from Mr. Edmonstone, respecting my conduct towards the Blurtpore Raja. They like all other directions from your Lordship, are perfectly clear, . . . I will not involve Government in a war if possible with this ungrateful man; but I fear he had entered so far into it already, that it will not be in my power to avoid attacking and reducing him and his forts without delay.*

In the words put in italics in the above extract Lake clearly sounded the note of war. Again, on the 30th November, 1804, in a 'private' letter to the Marquess Wellesley, he wrote :

*"I have received all your notes and remarks upon this war, which I am in hopes will not only end well, but shortly. What this treacherous fool Runjeet Sing can mean is beyond all comprehension, . . . he certainly deserves no favour from our Government, as his conduct has been the most unprovoked and violent that ever was heard of . . . I am fully aware of the necessity of avoiding war as much as possible at this moment as it would appear there is a general combination against our government, and yet I cannot help thinking when the two last actions are fully known, that neither Sindhia or the Raja of Berar will ever join themselves to a man of broken fortune like Holkar."*

Thus then it is evident, the Commander-in-Chief wanted war. The Governor-General also, as will be shortly related, fell into his views. It was resolved upon by both of these high English functionaries in India that the Raja of Bharatpur should be punished for his having afforded shelter to Holkar and his forces. So with a very light heart they entered into the war with the Raja of Bharatpur.

It was decided to lay siege to the fort of Dig in which Holkar and his army taken refuge. A battering train from Agra was ordered. Lake wrote to the Marquess Wellesley on the 30th November, 1804 :

*"I shall move forward tomorrow towards Deig, and see what can be done before the battering train comes up. I may possibly get at Holkar once more. I believe he has no force left, at least so inconsiderable that they are little more than an escort for himself. They say a few men of his brigades remain. This report shall be ascertained whether true or falsely very shortly."*

\* The English demanded the surrender of those who had taken refuge at Bharatpur, and the Raja earns our respect by daring their anger, and not complying with their demand.

On the 1st December, 1804, Lake commenced his march to Dig, which place was reached on the 8th December. It was resolved to reduce Dig by storm. The battering train and necessary stores arrived from Agra, on the 10th, and ground was broken on the 13th. In ten days, that is, on the 23rd, a breach was made in the wall, which was stormed and taken at mid-night with the loss on the part of the British of 227 men killed and wounded. On the ensuing day and night the town and fort of Dig were evacuated, the garrison flying in the direction of Bharatpur.

So long the Governor-General had issued no definite instructions to the Commander-in-Chief regarding his taking any steps against the Raja of Bharatpur. Although Lake had fully made up his mind to go to war with the Raja, the Marquess Wellesley had not sanctioned this. The latter was watching the progress of events. In the Despatch of the 24th March, 1805, the Governor-General in Council wrote to the Secret Committee of the East India Company :

"The expediency of attacking the Raja of Bharatpur or of overlooking his conduct appeared to depend in a material degree upon the operations which it might become necessary to adopt against Holkar. If it should become necessary for the Commander-in-Chief to pursue Holkar in such a direction, and to such a distance as would place Bharatpur between his army and the British positions it would be necessary to decide—

"First, whether it would be prudent to leave the State of Bhurtpore in full possession of its power and resources in the rear of our army.

"Secondly, whether in the event of the above question being decided in the negative, it might not be practicable to leave a force adequate to the reduction of the Raja's territories, or at least of sufficient strength to impose a restraint upon the forces of the Raja, although unequal to the operation above described while the main army should act against Holkar.

"Thirdly, whether in the event of neither of these two modes being practicable it would be more hazardous to suspend the pursuit of Holkar until the Raja of Bharatpur's power should be reduced, or to leave that state in possession of its power and resources in the rear of our army."

"The Governor-General was of opinion that these questions should be decided by the judgment of the Commander-in-Chief, and accordingly desired that his Excellency would exercise his discretion with respect to the adoption of one or other of these plans."

Lake was thus given a free hand to choose between the maintenance of peace and declaration of war with the Raja of Bharatpur. As has been said so often before, Lake was in favour of war. For it seems to us that at the time when Lake marched towards Dig, the prolongation of the war and the subsequent siege of Bharatpur could have been averted, had the English been inclined towards the maintenance of or rather the bringing about of peace with the Raja of Bharatpur.

Holkar was also now in *extremis*. There is no reason to suppose that he would not have listened to overtures of peace from the English.

They thought that they had to deal with weak enemies, and nothing short of their utter annihilation, and annexation of their territories would have satisfied them.

When the Governor-General came to know of the reduction and fall of Dig, instead of making overtures of peace to the fallen foe, a step which would have shown his generous and magnanimous nature, he did not hesitate to give final instructions to Lake to make war on the Raja. In the despatch marked "Secret and official" and dated Fort William, December 20, 1804. The Marquess Wellesley wrote to Lake :



"I entirely approve the measures which Your Excellency has already pursued for the purpose of frustrating the effects of the Raja's treachery and hostility, and for the reduction of the fortress of Deig. The entire reduction of the power and resources of the Raja of Bharatpur however, is now become indispensably necessary, and I accordingly authorize and direct Your Excellency to adopt immediate arrangement for the attainment of that desirable object, and for the annexation to the British power, in such manner as Your Excellency may deem most consistent with the public interests, of all the forts, territories, and possessions belonging to the Raja of Bharatpur."

At the time when the Commander-in-Chief received the above letter from the Marquess Wellesley, he was busily engaged in prosecuting the siege of Bharatpur. The loss of Dig was a great blow to the Raja, but to his credit let it be said that he did not desert the refugee Holkar and was willing to share all the misfortunes with him. He did not submit to the humiliating terms proposed to him by the victors and rather risked all that he possessed than play false to the traditions of his country and religion by betraying Holkar who had sought his protection.

With the loss of Dig, the Raja had lost all his territories, except the town of Bharatpur. The surrounding country had been taken charge of by the English. Upon the resources of Bharatpur alone, he had to depend for his existence. The town of Bharatpur was eight miles in extent and was surrounded by a mud wall of great thickness and height and a very wide and deep ditch filled with water. The fort was situated at the eastern extremity of the town, and the walls had bastions, mounted with artillery. The whole force of the Raja, with many of the inhabitants of the surrounding country together with the shattered battalions of Holkar's army was thrown into the place. Holkar's cavalry remained outside the town and eluded the pursuit of the English by their rapid marches and not a little annoyed and harried them by attacking their convoys and cutting off supplies.

Lake moved from Dig on the 29th of December and arrived before Bharatpur on the 3rd of January, 1805. The siege was commenced in right earnest and the batteries were opened against the town on the 7th. On the 9th, a breach in the wall of the town was reported practicable, and storming the town was determined upon. But so far all their efforts met with no success. On the 10th January, Lake wrote to the Marquess Wellesley :

"I have the honour to inform Your Lordship, that in consequence of the breach in the wall of the town being reported practicable, I determined on storming the place yesterday evening. I chose this time, in order to prevent the enemy from stockading the breach during the night which had hitherto been the case.

"I am sorry to add, that obstacles of an insurmountable nature were opposed to the storming party, on their arrival at the breach, the water in the ditch was exceedingly deep, this difficulty however was speedily surmounted, and the party gained the foot of the breach, but though every exertion was made by both officers and men, the breach was so imperfect, that every effort to gain the top proved fruitless, and the column, after making several attempts with heavy loss, was obliged to retire, which they did in excellent order, to our battery,"

This attempt to capture Bharatpur by force was unsuccessful, but the Commander-in-Chief fed the mind of the Governor-General with hopes which were never to be realized.

A second attempt was again made, but this too, was as unsuccessful as the first.

This failure for the second time greatly depressed the Commander-in-Chief. The loss in men and want of military stores and provisions delayed the commencement of renewed operations, till the beginning of February, when the batteries were opened upon the wall, and on the 20th of the same month, the breach being supposed to be practicable, an attempt for the third time to carry the place by assault was made under the directions of the Commander-in-Chief. Like the first two attempts, this one, too, was unsuccessful. But this failure was largely due to the British soldiers. The manner in which they behaved themselves was simply scandalous and showed how demoralized they had become by their repeated failures. Had it not been for the pluck and courage of the Indian Sepoys, it is not improbable that the Commander-in-Chief would have been obliged to raise the siege and retire into the Company's territories. The cowardly and insubordinate manner in which the British soldiers behaved themselves in contrast with the plucky and courageous conduct of the Indian troops has been thus described by a British writer :

"These two failures having enforced the necessity of more regular proceedings, approaches were begun in a different position, and carried to the edge of the ditch, supplies of stores and artillery were brought from Agra and other depots, and more powerful batteries, though still much too weak for the purpose, opened against part of the wall where the curtain was of less width than usual, and was effectually covered by a bastion at either extremity. On the morning of the day appointed for the storm, the garrison, whose courage had been elevated to the highest pitch by the slow progress of the siege, . . . made a desperate sally upon the head of the trenches, gained possession of them for a time, and were repulsed only after they had killed the officer of His Majesty's 75th, commanding the advance, and many of the men. They gained and retained possession also of a trench in advance of the lines, from which it was proposed to dislodge them, and follow them closely into the breach. *The Europeans, however, of His Majesty's 75th and 76th who were at the head of the column, refused to advance. . . . The entreaties and expostulations of their officers failing to produce any effect, two regiments of Native Infantry, the 12th and 13th, were summoned to the front, and gallantly advanced to the storm.*"

In the sentences italicized in the above extract, the very cowardly nature of the English soldiers is brought-out in bold relief when compared with the courage and pluck of the Indian Sepoys. It was with the help of these Sepoys that the Bharatpur garrison, which had made a desperate sally upon the head of the trenches, were repulsed. But of course these Sepoys could not retrieve the disaster of the day or gain possession of Bharatpur by assault as their British leaders were in the same predicament as their comrades. So necessarily the third attempt to carry the place by assault proved a failure like the two previous ones. But for the courage and pluck of the Sepoys by whom the Bharatpur garrison were repulsed, there is no doubt that the English in India would have fared very badly and their power altogether sapped. Had not the Bharatpur garrison been repulsed, it is probable they would have made short work of the British soldiers who had been seized with panic and were insubordinate in refusing to advance. It was the much abused Indian Sepoys who preserved the English from utter ruin.

Although the third attempt of the Commander-in-Chief to capture Bharatpur was a

huge failure, he did not cease from sending clap-trap despatches to the Marquess Wellesley designed to minister to the war-fever and to persuade that all was well when it was not well. That these despatches are not reliable, and that if any one were to attempt to base his history on those official documents, such an attempt would be a failure, would be evident from the fact that the cowardly manner in which the British soldiers behaved, and the courage and pluck which Indian Sepoys exhibited in repulsing the Bharatpur garrison find no place in the despatches of Lake to the Governor-General or of the letter to the Secret Committee of the East India Company. Even Mill is obliged to write :

"One of the most remarkable perhaps, of all the events in the history of the British nation in India, is the difficulty, found by this victorious army, of subduing the capital of a petty Raja of Hindustan. The circumstances have not been sufficiently disclosed, for, on the subject of these unsuccessful attacks, the reports of the Commander-in-Chief are laconic. As general causes, he chiefly alleges the extent of the place, the number of its defenders, the strength of its works, and, lastly, the incapacity of his engineers: as if a Commandar-in-Chief were fit for his office who is not himself an engineer."

But it is not easy for any English writer to lay his finger on the real causes of the failure of the force under the command of General Lake in subduing Bharatpur. All the victories which the Britishers had so far attained in India, were gained by means of treachery and fraud and not by means of the sword or fair fight alone. Fortunately, the Raja of Bharatpur and Holkar had not at this time any British officer or soldier in their employ. And so the English found it difficult to corrupt and demoralize the defenders of Bharatpur. Among the defenders there were as yet no traitors.

General Lake's force had been augmented by the arrival of the army of Guzerat. This division was, as said before, under the command of Colonel Murray, who, after capturing all the possessions of Holkar in the Central India, returned to Guzerat, handing over the command to Major-General Jones. This army arrived at Bharatpore on the 12th February and took part in the third unsuccessful assault on Bharatpore and other succeeding operations.

Holkar's cavalry, as said before, was outside the towns of Bharatpur. It had been joined also by the light horse under Amir Khan. This cavalry was giving no end of trouble to the English by cutting off their supplies and attacking convoys. Had Amir Khan thrown his heart and soul into harassing the British camp and column and co-operated heartily with Holkar in the struggle, there can be no doubt that the fate of the British would have been for ever sealed in India. But Amir Khan did everything in a very perfunctory and half-hearted manner. It has already been hinted at before, that the English were in secret understanding with Amir Khan, though he was not as yet completely bought off. From Amir Khan's Memoirs, it appears that the Raja of Bharatpore advised him to act in concert with Holkar. The Raja is reported to have said

"as both Sirdars could not act well together in the same field, it would be better that one

should remain at Bhurtpore while the other headed an incursion into the enemy's territory, and carried the war thither." \*

Accordingly, Amir Khan went upon this expedition. To pursue Amir Khan, Lake had detached the cavalry under General Smith, who did not find much difficulty in reducing the Afghan adventurers force. It seems to us that as Amir Khan was hunting with the hound and running with the hare, he played into the hands of the English by suffering the destruction of the men who were principally the remnants of Holkar's cavalry. Amir Khan returned to Bharatpur, and rejoined Holkar on the 20th March, 1805. General Smith also returning three day's afterwards ( i. e., on the 23rd March ), rejoined Lake.

When the news of the third unsuccessful attempt in subduing Bharatpur reached the Governor-General, he seems to have been much depressed and concerned at the failure. On the 5th March he forwarded to Lake ( who in the meanwhile had been raised to the peerage and henceforth known as Lord Lake ) notes of instructions to terminate the war as soon as possible. Before dealing with these Notes, on which the opinions of the Commander-in-Chief were invited, it is necessary to refer to the letter, which the Marquess Wellesley wrote—to Lake on the 9th March, 1805. In that letter the Governor-General wrote :

"In reading over my private communication, to Your Lordship, I fear that you may be impressed with an opinion that I feel too strong a desire for the early termination of the war, even on any terms. . . . I request Your Lordship not to attempt to renew the siege without full and ample means for its prosecution, not to attempt any assault while the least doubt exists of success. *I fear that we have despised the place and enemy so much as to render both formidable.*

"The resumption of the siege of Bhurtpore previously to the pursuit of Holkar is also a point which I must seriously recommend to your attention. Unless the reduction of the place be absolutely necessary previously to that pursuit, or essential to our honour, I wish Your Lordship to consider whether the risk of another failure, and the consequent loss ( to say no more ), ought to be hazarded. . . . The health of the troops must also be most seriously and tenderly considered."

In plain language, then, the Governor-General had become quite tired of the war and desired for peace, almost on any terms. This will also be evident from the Notes to which reference will be presently made.

The only silver lining to the dark cloud in which the political horizon of the English in India was enshrouded was the success of General Smith over Amir Khan. In his 'private' letter of 13th March, 1805, the Marquess Wellesley wrote to Lord Lake:

"This moment I have received an account of General Smith's highly meritorious conduct in overtaking and defeating Ameer Khan at Ufzulghur. I now trust that the effects of that incursion will prove favourable, and that the robber and assassin will meet his deserts. I conclude that General Smith will hunt the tiger in the jungles into destruction."

It is not understood why Smith did not pursue Amir Khan, but allowed him to rejoin Holkar.

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\* P. 250.

The Governor-General's "Notes", under date the 5th March, 1805, throw much light on the methods employed by the English in getting out of the Bharatpur imbroglio. These "Notes" were addressed to Lake, who was invited to give his opinions thereon. The intrigues which had been set afoot can be easily seen through these "Notes." Some of the notes together with the opinions of Lake on them are given below. The Marquess Wellesley wrote :

"While the Commander-in-Chief is preparing for the siege of Bhurtpore, or actually engaged in it, might it not be advisable to endeavour to detach Runjeet Sing from Holkar? Although Bhurtpore has not fallen, Runjeet Sing is certainly much reduced and alarmed, and Holkar would be hopeless if abandoned by Runjeet Sing."

To this note, Lake replied as follows :

"Every endeavour is making, and will be made to detach Runjeet Sing from Holkar. Runjeet Singh is certainly much reduced in money and greatly alarmed. Holkar and his followers would have little hope if abandoned by Runjeet Sing."

This shows how intrigues had been set afoot to detach the Raja of Bharatpur from Holkar.

Another "Note" of the Governor-General runs as follows :

"Might it not be stated to Runjeet Sing that, although his fate has been delayed, he must know it to be inevitable, that a few weeks more must destroy him altogether, that his only certainty of escape is to throw himself upon the clemency of the British Government, and renounce Holkar altogether, in which case he will be admitted to pardon, and restored to his possessions?"

This shows climbing down on the part of the Governor-General. It will be remembered that when he finally approved of the war with the Raja of Bharatpur, he wrote to Lake, in his 'secret and official' letter dated 20th December, 1804, that

"the entire reduction of the power and resources of the Raja of Bharatpur however, is now become indispensably necessary, and I accordingly authorize and direct your Excellency to adopt immediate arrangements for the attainment of that desirable object and for the annexation to the British power, in such manner as your Excellency may deem most consistent with the public interests, of all the forts, territories, and possessions belonging to the Raja of Bharatpur."

Lake had also advocated the spoliation of all the possessions of the Raja of Bharatpur. In his 'private' letter to the Marquess Wellesley dated Muttra, 30th November, 1804, he wrote :

"He (the Raja of Bharatpur) certainly deserves no favor from our Government, as his conduct has been the most unprovoked and violent that ever was heard of."

But now Lake had also to climb down. He was now trying his best to bring about reconciliation with the Raja of Bharatpur by means of sweet and specious promises as the following observation of his on the Governor-General's "Note" shows. In reply to the Marquess Wellesley's "Note" he wrote :

"Every means has been attempted to show Runjeet Sing how fruitless any attempts of his to oppose the British Government must prove.

"A correspondence is now going on between me and Runjeet Sing, which I am in hopes will lead to an accommodation sufficiently favorable to the British Government, and prevent any future union of interests between that Chief and Jeswunt Rao Holkar."

This was really a climb down for Lake and shows how busily engaged he was in carrying on intrigues to detach the Raja from Holkar.

The Marquess Wellesley, it would seem, was in favor of raising the siege of Bharatpur, for one of his 'Notes' ran as follows :

"The two great objects now to be accomplished, are the expulsion of Holkar and the protection of our own territories, the reduction of Runjeet Sing, or of Bharatpur, is only important as connected with those objects."

On this 'Note,' Lake observed :

"Either an amicable accommodation with Runjeet Sing, or the reduction of Bharatpur will enable me to expel Holkar and Ameer Khan, but their expulsion previously will not be possible."

Amir Khan was the man with whom the Britishers had been carrying on intrigues since a long time past. That Afghan adventurer was, as has been said so often before, hunting with the hound and running with the hare. While professing to be a partizan of Holkar, he did not consider it inconsistent with his sense of honor to listen to the overtures of the British. It was their interest to buy over Amir Khan. So the Governor-General wrote in a "Note":

Mr. Seton and General Smith should be authorized to offer a settlement of land to such of Ameer Khan's followers as would quit him. Even Ameer Khan himself might be offered a jagheer, if he will quit Holkar's cause, submit to the British Government, and come into General Smith's camp within a stated period of time."

To this 'Note,' Lake replied as follows :

"A settlement in lands should certainly be offered to Ameer Khan's followers.

"Ameer Khad is most exorbitant in his demands. He asks thirty-three lacs of rupees in the first instance, and a jagheer for 10,000 horse. This was his proposal in Rohilcund, and I doubt much if he would now be more moderate, as his battalions and guns have joined Scindhia."

From the above, the manner in which the Britishers were intriguing with Amir Khan and his followers is quite evident. It may also be safely presumed that Amir Khan betrayed Holkar in order to curry favor with the English and also in the hope of some day gaining his object from them, namely, thirty-three lacs of rupees in cash and a jagir for 10,000 horse. When we take into consideration the critical position in which the English were placed at this time in India, we are inclined to believe that Amir Khan was given to understand by them that his demand would be complied with, and it was thus that he played false to Holkar. It also appears to us that General Smith did not vanquish and defeat Amir Khan but prevailed on his followers to desert their Afghan leader by holding out to them the temptation of a settlement of land and other pecuniary gains.

After the three unsuccessful attempts at subduing Bharatpur, the Britishers were not very anxious to renew offensive operations against it. As said before, they were trying to negotiate with the Raja of Bharatpur for peace. Although the Raja had the satisfaction of seeing the thorough humiliation of the English, it was necessary for him to attend to his own safety. The Raja did not lose his penetration in this perplexed state of affairs, conjecturing that Amir Khan had been playing false with Holkar, and despairing of any assistance from Sindhia or any

other prince in India, he found it necessary not to reject the terms which were offered to him.

We have already narrated on a previous page, how the English were bullying the Raja of Nagpur on the mere suspicion that he intended to join Holkar or render assistance to him. Although Sindhia had been promised the territories which would be conquered from Holkar, yet he discovered how he had been duped, and was therefore anxious to sever the alliance he had entered into with the English. When the news of their repeated failure in subduing Bharatpur reached Sindhia there is no doubt that he intended to join Holkar and thus try to regain some of his lost possessions. We have already stated the manner in which he narrated his grievances in a letter he wrote to the Governor-General, extracts from which have already been given on a previous page. If there was ever any favorable opportunity for Sindhia to recover his lost possessions, it was now when nothing but gloom surrounded the English in India. Why Sindhia did not take advantage of the golden opportunity which presented itself to him has remained an enigma to many. His contingent under Bapu Sindhia and Sadhasheorao Bhow had joined Holkar. And could he but have come and joined Holkar, it would have been very hard, if not impossible, for the English to extricate themselves from the critical position they were in. The inability of Sindhia to join Holkar seems to us to have been due to the treachery of his Christian officers. At this time, of which we are writing, John Baptiste Filose was the virtual Commander-in-Chief of Sindhia's army. He was a Christian half-caste. It is probable that he was in intrigue with the English and thus prevented Sindhia from joining Holkar. Our conjecture derives support from the fact that Sindhia about this time placed this man under arrest, because he suspected his loyalty and good faith. Regarding this arrest, the grandson of John Baptiste Filose thus wrote in the *Astatic Quarterly Review* for April, 1889 :

"When Colonel Filose had thus distinguished himself by so many successful undertakings, probably standing higher in Scindhia's favor than any of the other foreign officers, jealousy began to appear in various quarters. The Maharaja Holkar had employed a few Europeans, but he had never placed full confidence in them. He now reminded Scindhia, in one of their private interviews, that he was on bad terms with the English, and that, under the circumstances, it was unsafe to place Colonel Filose in such a high position. For should these foreign officers join the English, as they probably would, Scindhia would find it impossible to defend himself. He therefore recommended that on some excuse or other Filose should be placed under arrest."

Now, we do not understand the solicitude of Holkar to advise Sindhia to place John Baptiste under arrest, had he not been smarting under the wrongs and injuries he suffered at the hands of the British which he knew he would not have done had Sindhia joined him. It is impossible to state all that transpired in the private interviews between Holkar and Sindhia. But Sindhia would not have taken such a step as that of placing Filose under arrest, had he not been convinced by Holkar's reasonings and arguments that his inability to repair to Bharatpur in time and join Holkar was due to the treachery of John Baptiste Filose. From the words of Lake in his letter to the Governor-General, dated Agra 22nd September, 1804, already mentioned on a

previous page, it should also be presumed that Baptiste was carrying on intrigues with the English.

This was the position then of the Raja of Bharatpur. He had helped the destitute Holkar when the affairs of the latter were at their lowest ebb. With his characteristic ideal of oriental hospitality, he had given refuge to Holkar, knowing fully well the risk he was running and the punishment that would have been inflicted on him by the vindictive English if they succeeded in subduing his captial. But when he saw that he had single-handed to fight with the odds opposed against him and when he did not expect any assistance from any quarter and when he discovered that Amir Khan was not in hearty co-operation with Holkar the instinct of self-preservation dictated him to lend a favorable ear to the overtures made to him by the English. Resistance against them under the circumstances we have alluded to was hopeless. Hence, little fault should be found with him for his willingness to treat with them. It should also be remembered that it was not he who sued for peace with them, but it was they who opened the negotiations for peace with him. To his credit it should also be prominently mentioned that surrender of Holkar into the hands of the English did not enter into the Treaty of Peace. The English were anxious to get possession of the person of Holkar. To them the reduction of the power of the Raja of Bharatpur was not such a desirable object as the capture of Holkar. In his despatches and notes of instructions to General Lake, the Governor-General has over and over again reminded him of the necessity of pursuing Holkar to extremity. In his "Notes" of the 5th March, 1805, it is stated :

"The two great objects now to be accomplished, are the expulsion of Holkar and the protection of our own territories : the reduction of Runjeet Sing, or of Bharatpur, is only important as connected with those objects."

Again in his "Notes" of the 10th March, the Governor-General wrote :

"It would certainly be highly advantageous, if practicable, to drive off Holkar altogether, and to pursue him to extremity even during the siege.

"If the siege of Bharatpur should not be resumed, I hope that an immediate attack will be made upon Holkar, and that he will be vigorously pursued to extremity, by a properly equipped force.

"The great object therefore even with respect to Scindhia is the reduction of Holkar, . . ."

The English having been so anxious for the reduction of Holkar, it is not taxing one's intelligence too much to suppose that the Commander-in-Chief must have held up temptations and allurements and made sweet and specious promises to the Raja of Bharatpur to induce him to surrender Holkar into his hands. It should be remembered that the person of Holkar was entirely at the mercy of the Raja of Bharatpur. Lake must have employed every conceivable means to get possession of the person of Holkar. It is, therefore, highly creditable to the Raja, that he did not curry favour with the English by surrendering the person of Holkar into their hands, as did his name-sake of the Punjab, not very many months afterwards.



The siege of Bharatpur was now to be at an end. The negotiations which the Commander-in-Chief had opened with the Raja terminated in the Treaty of Peace drawn up in the beginning of April, 1805. Holkar was allowed to depart from Bharatpur towards the end of March, 1805. He ultimately fled towards the Panjab, where he thought that he would find an asylum in the country of the Sikhs. But he discovered his mistake not before long and he was pursued by the Commander-in-Chief.

On the 10th April, 1805, Lake wrote to the Marquess Wellesley as follows :

"I take the very earliest opportunity of informing you that peace is established between the British Government and Runjeet Sing. I trust the terms may be deemed proper by your Lordship. . . .

"Holkar is reduced in the extreme : he has no troops, at least so few that they can do no more than guard his person, even those are starving, and he has not a rupee to give them. They have of late had a most wearisome life, and will not remain with him.

"I feel relieved by this negotiation, although I have reason to think we should soon have been in possession of the town, I fear our troops must have suffered exceedingly from the heat. . . .

"I hope and trust, this act of mine will meet your approbation ; I felt the necessity of getting rid of this siege, that we might be ready for Scindhia, who will, I should imagine, give up his hostile intentions."

To show to the world that the English had punished the Raja for his so-called treachery to them, it was laid down on paper that he should be made to pay twenty lacs of rupees, and be deprived of Dig and the country granted to him the previous year. Of the fine of twenty lacs imposed on him, the Raja paid only three lacs to Lake. It seems to us that this payment of three lacs by the Raja was a sort of make-believe, for the Raja was not then in a position to pay anything to the English. The fortress of Dig was restored to the Raja not very long afterwards, and so he did not lose anything by defying their authority and inflicting upon them the humiliation and disgrace of their repeated failures in subduing Bharatpur.

Holkar should be looked upon as the saviour of India at this critical juncture. On a previous occasion we described him as lacking in statesmanship. It is no doubt true that he played into the hands of the English and helped them in placing the yoke of the subsidiary alliance on the neck of the Peshwa and betrayed the Maratha Confederates into the war. He did not join the Maratha Confederates and thus his conduct was most reprehensible. But when he discovered that the Britishers had made him their cat's-paw in gaining their selfish ends and when he found how he had been duped by them, he prepared for war with them. He had benefited from the experience of Sindhia, and so, before going to war with them, he very properly got rid of the foreign officers he had in his employ by executing them. The step of getting rid of the foreign servants saved him from the disgrace and disasters which had befallen Sindhia in his war with the English. It should be remembered that had Holkar not inflicted defeats on them, and thus arrested their career of successful intrigues and conspiracies, it is difficult to estimate to what extremity the country would have been then brought. The news of the disasters which had befallen the English in their unjust war with Holkar made such an impression on the minds of the people of England that they came to realize that their affairs in India were not safe in the hands of the then

Governor-General. It will be remembered that the Marquess Wellesley had intimated his intention of resigning the service of the Company and of embarking for England in the month of January, 1803. But the confusion and disorder which he succeeded in creating in the Maratha Polity by his machinations, made him change his mind and ask the permission of the Court of Directors to stay on in India and to improve the interests of the British in India. He tried to bring about the ruin of the Maratha States, opened campaigns of intrigues and conspiracies against them, and declared unjust and unrighteous war on them and deprived them of their fertile territories and provinces.

Success like charity covers many sins. When this Governor-General was able to show to his co-religionists and compatriots in England the extension of their power in India by the annexation of fertile provinces, they forgot his faults and allowed him to stay on in India for almost an indefinite period and gave him a free hand in carrying out his policy.

Had Jaswunt Rao been subdued, not only would his dominion have been annexed by the British, but the map of India from the Himalaya to the Cape Comorin would have been dyed red by the Marquess Wellesley. It is true that Sindhia had been promised a portion of the territory conquered from Holkar. But as pointed out before, it would not have taken the English long to discover some pretext to deprive Sindhia of his new acquisitions. In fact when the fate of the English was trembling in the balance, they did not hesitate in charging Sindhia with treachery, and on the termination of the war with Holkar, they would have certainly declared hostilities with Sindhia. Possessing very short memories, and altogether devoid of gratitude, it is not to be surprised at, that the English would have deprived of their possessions those princes who had in any way rendered them assistance in their hour of trial and need. Witness the treatment they meted out to the Raja of Bharatpur. That prince was provoked to hostilities by the peremptory demands made on him by the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief, who both conspired in advocating spoliation of the Raja's possessions. They forgot the assistance they had received from the Raja in the war with Sindhia.

Supposing then that the Raja of Bharatpur and Holkar had both been subdued by the English, is there any room for doubt that they would have gone to war with the other native princes of India and deprived them of their possessions and cherished rights and privileges? On some pretext or other, the states and principalities of Rajputana and Central India would have been annexed. The Sikhs in the Panjab had not then risen into a Power of whom the English took any notice. The Panjab would have been transformed into a province of the East India Company.

If ever the acquisition of the whole of India by the English was an easy affair, it was after the break-up of the Maratha Confederacy and the destruction of the military resources and power of Sindhia and the Raja of Berar on the battle-fields of Assaye, Argaum and Laswari. Had not Holkar come in the way, the Marquess Wellesley would have accomplished what the Marquis Hastings and Lord Dalhousie even failed to do. The dream of Dalhousie to color the whole map of India red was

never realized. If circumstances were against Dalhousie's scheme being carried into execution, there was no difficulty in the path of the Marquess Wellesley, excepting the existence of Holkar, leading to the goal of annexation of all the States of Native India.

For these reasons, then, Holkar must be looked upon as the saviour of India. For although within a little over half-a-century the English rose to supreme power in India, their subsequent rise was altogether different from what it would have been had they come to possess it in the early years of the Nineteenth Century. The supremacy of the English in India in the time of the Marquess Wellesley would have been attended with consequences fatal to the very existence of Indians. The British would have looked upon India as a conquered country, and the Indians would not have been treated any better than the aborigines of other countries which the British have colonized. When the English rose to supreme power in India under Dalhousie the line of policy on which India was to be governed was clearly although very faintly drawn by them. Fifty years of intercourse with the English had taught the natives of India to know the character of the new comers, and they had also been initiated into the language, literature and science of the natives of England. Thus those who could penetrate and see through the designs of Dalhousie set in operation those forces which saved India from utter annihilation and brought her under the Crown and Parliament of England.

But the extension of the power of the English in India in the days of the Marquess Wellesley would not have been attended with those beneficial consequences which naturally followed half a century afterwards.

Success like charity, as said before, covers many sins. Had the English succeeded in their contest with Holkar, there is little doubt that, notwithstanding all his shortcomings, the Marquess Wellesley would have been granted an extension of several year's residence in India to carry out the policy which was so dear to the heart of Pitt, who was no Little Englander. The loss of America was to be made good, and, as already said before, Pitt commissioned the Marquess Wellesley to found an Empire for England in India. The successful resistance of Holkar, then, against the extension of the power of the English in India should be looked upon as providential for the welfare of India. Looked at in this light, we can virtually share the belief with the Sepoys that Bharatpur was under the care of Krishna. Mr. Thornton in his *Gazetteer of India* tells us that

"in 1805, during the first siege, some of the native soldiers in the British service declared that they distinctly saw the town defended by that divinity, dressed in yellow garments and armed with his peculiar weapons, the bow, mace, conch and pipe."

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### THE LAST DAYS OF THE MARQUESS WELLESLEY IN INDIA

After the raising of the siege of Bharatpur, the Marquess Wellesley's name is not connected with any other important political transaction in India, except his settlement of disputes with Sindhia. The nature of the disputes with Sindhia has already been alluded to ; that that Maratha Prince had had grievances, which were not imaginary, against the Company, cannot be denied. Sindhia had threatened the English with a renewal of the war. With that object in view, he had moved out of Burhanpur and was on his march towards Bharatpur. He had placed under arrest Mr. Jenkins, the British resident, attached to his Court. This was against every received principle of the Law of Nations. But then that was the only way in which Sindhia could expect to draw the attention of the English to his wrongs and make them either declare hostilities against him or redress his grievances and wrongs. And subsequent events proved that he was not mistaken.

When it became known to the English that Sindhia was on his way to Bharatpur they remonstrated with him. Of course as said before, Sindhia could not reach Bharatpur in time when the siege was progressing, owing principally to the treachery of John Baptiste Filose.

It is the second time that Dowlat Rao Sindhia could not prevent the English from succeeding in gaining their ends. It will be remembered that Dowlat Rao Sindhia could not go to Puna in time to prevent the Peshwa from making the alliance with the British. Again, during the siege of Bharatpur, he was unable to march on to that place and thus annihilate the latter. The words "Too Late" were ever written on all his expeditions undertaken with the object of frustrating the attempts of the British to obtain supremacy in India.

Sindhia finding himself helpless and unable to render any material assistance to either the Raja of Bharatpur or Holkar during the siege, adopted a conciliatory tone in replying to the remonstrances of the British Government of India. He was at this time not far from the river Chambal and he declared that he was unable to proceed to settle his own country from the state of his finances, and that his object in marching towards Bharatpur was to mediate a peace. He had also sent on a part of his cavalry and Pindaris towards Bharatpur. But as said before, it was "too late", as the Raja had concluded the treaty with the English.

Sindhia was promised pecuniary assistance provided he would return and employ himself in taking possession of Holkar's unoccupied districts in Malwa and apologise for his conduct in detaining and placing under arrest the British resident at his Court. Sindhia acquiesced and retired eight miles towards Sabbalgarh. Holkar and Amir Khan after leaving Bharatpur came and joined Sindhia at this place. This open junction of Holkar and Sindhia alarmed the English. But Sindhia tried to justify himself by

explaining that Holkar had intended to plunder the territories then in the possession of the Britishers but at his request abandoned that design, and consented to his mediation for the attainment of peace ; to whom this explanation did not appear satisfactory. Lake made preparations to attack Sindhia and Holkar. But the latter at first repaired to Kota, and afterwards moved towards Ajmere. It was this move of Sindhia and Holkar which prevented Lake from pursuing and fighting them. In his letter marked "Private" and dated April 25, 1805, Lake wrote to the Marquess Wellesley :

"I have been honored with all your notes and directions respecting Dowlut Rao Scindhia which your Lordship may rest assured shall be carried into effect in the most direct and speedy manner possible. My only fear is, that on my approach, he with his confederates will retire, and that it will be impossible for me to follow him ; the country through which he will pass to the Deccan, being at this season so extremely hot, and almost entirely without water. . . . The only difficulty is, that he and his confederates are so alarmed and weary that they never rest at night. . . . There is no vile act these people are not equal to ; that inhuman monster Holkar's chief delight is in butchering all Europeans, and by all accounts Serje Rao Ghautka's disposition towards us is precisely the same. \* "

On the receipt of this letter and on hearing the news of Sindhia's retirement the Marquess Wellesley directed Lake not to pursue Sindhia or Holkar. But the English were not anxious to make peace or settle differences with Sindhia and Holkar ; they were only trying to gain time and making preparation, with the intention of renewing the war on the outbreak of the rainy season.

Marquess Wellesley advised Lake to canton the troops in such a manner as would be easily available for renewing the war with Sindhia and Holkar, if necessary.

There is very little doubt that had the Marquess Wellesley remained in India till August, 1805, he would have renewed the war with Sindhia and also with Holkar in order to wipe out the disgrace attendant on the unsuccessful siege of Bharatpur. Lake was also doing everything to minister to the war-fever. He had to retrieve his character as a general, and therefore he was so anxious to see the renewal of the war.

But, fortunately, the Marquess Wellesley had to leave India for good before the beginning of August, 1805. In a way, he was recalled, for his wars with the Marathas had swollen the debt of the East India Company to such an extent that the Directors were alarmed at his proceedings. The natives of England never spent a single farthing out of their pockets in establishing their power in India. They came to India in the capacity of humble traders. They, as a nation of shop-keepers, wanted to make money by means fair or foul. But the wars in which the Marquess Wellesley involved the Company were not calculated to enrich them, nay, on the contrary they found that the East India trade was not a paying concern and they were not receiving a handsome dividend. Consequently, a hue and cry was raised in England against the Marquess Wellesley's policy and he was desired to return from India.\* The Court of Directors severely and adversely criticized the Indian policy of the Governor-General.

\* How unpopular the Marquess Wellesley's war on Holkar was in England can be easily judged from the letter of the Marquis Cornwallis to Lieut.-General Ross dated Culford, Oct. 14, 1804. He

Not waiting for an explanation from the Marquess Wellesley regarding his doings in India, the Court of Directors nominated the Marquess Cornwallis as Governor-General and sent him out to India.

At that time the English wanted peace at any cost in India. Lord Cornwallis was supposed to be a man who loved peace more than anything else. But that was, no doubt, a mistake. When the news of the successful campaigns of Generals Wellesley and Lake against the Marathas reached England, Cornwallis wrote a letter of congratulation to the Marquess Wellesley, the letter marked 'Private' and dated Burlington Street, April 30th, 1804, which was received by the latter on the 27th September, 1804. In it he wrote :

"I can with truth assure you that I have felt much anxiety during the course of your Maratha warfare, being well aware of the difficulties against which you had to contend, and I now sincerely congratulate you on your brilliant successes.

"The important and glorious achievements of my friends, General Lake and Wellesley, have afforded me the most sincere satisfaction.

"As I am now growing old, and perhaps out of fashion, it is not likely that I should again be selected for any active situation.

"My wishes, however, continue to be as warm as they ever were for the honour and welfare of my country, and I earnestly hope that, in every part of the globe, its interests will be promoted by as able statesmen, and its armies conducted by as meritorious generals, as those who have of late been entrusted with the preservation of our Asiatic Empire."

The man who could express the sentiments quoted above and congratulate the author of the most unjust and unjustifiable war on the Marathas, can hardly be called a lover of peace. Cornwallis was as great a follower of Pitt as was the Marquess Wellesley; and Pitt was no Little Englander. It seems to us that Cornwallis was sent out for the second time to India to carry out the policy of Pitt in extending the

wrote :—"If your account of Lord Wellesley's conduct did not come from so good authority, I should scarcely believe it possible that after having escaped the extreme hazards to which our interests in India were at various times exposed during the late contests with the Marathas, he should so soon, not only wantonly, but, according to Charles Grant's statement, criminally involve himself in all the difficulties of another war against an able and powerful Chief of that nation (*i.e.*, Holkar). I should conceive that the Ministers would be inclined to bring him away, although they might be disposed to let him down easy."

Again, on the 6th Dec. 1804, the Marquis Cornwallis wrote to Lieut.-General Ross :—"Lord Castlereagh came here yesterday early from Lord Paget's. . . . He told me that Mr. Pitt had entered thoroughly into the business, and, although he was disposed to show Lord Wellesley all the attention which the circumstances could admit, he was decidedly of opinion that he had acted most imprudently and illegally, and that he could not be suffered to remain in the Government."

On the next day, that is, 7th Dec., 1804, the Marquis Cornwallis wrote to Lieut.-General Ross :—"Amongst other charges, Lord Wellesley is attacked on account of the order for the commencement of hostilities against Holkar being signed only by himself, without any notification of its being done with the concurrence of his council. Lord Castlereagh asked me in what cases the Governor-General's signature alone was used, I said that I could not at this distance of time charge my memory exactly, but that I thought it was in the correspondence with the princes of the country, and with our Residents at their Courts, but that they were either read in Council or circulated to the Members."

power of the British in India. The reputation which Cornwallis enjoyed as a peace-loving man blinded the natives of England from seeing the man in his true colors. The only difference between Cornwallis and the Marquess Wellesley was that the latter wanted to extend the power of England in India as speedily as possible and he was running at a speed which did not commend itself to the more thoughtful followers of Pitt.

The Marquess Cornwallis landed at Madras on the 18th July, 1805. On the following day, he wrote to the Marquess Wellesley :

"I arrived last night at this anchorage, when I learned that your Lordship is still in Bengal. I have therefore requested the Admiral to despatch an express vessel, to inform you that it is my intention to proceed in three or four days to Calcutta, in order that my arrival might be as little inconvenient to your Lordship as possible."

Cornwallis arrived in Calcutta on the 30th July and took over the charge of the Government of India the same day. The Marquess Wellesley embarked in His Majesty's ship the *Howe* on the 15th of August and left India for good.

Thus left the shores of India that ruler who heaped nothing but miseries on this country and whose name is not associated with any act for which the natives of India would cherish his memory with gratitude. He was the greatest follower of Machiavelli whom England ever sent out to India. After his return to England, an attempt was made in the House of Commons at his impeachment, but with what result has already been mentioned in some of the previous chapters.

The accusers of Lord Wellesley would not have moved their little fingers against him had not his administration of India deprived their country of the expected remittance home of eight millions pounds sterling. In his speech in the House of Commons on Feb. 25, 1806, relating to the affairs of India, Mr. Paul said :

"By the act of 1793, after the payment of the military and civil establishment, the act enjoins that a sum not less than one million of pounds sterling shall be applied for commercial purposes, and remitted to Great Britain, to form a part of its national wealth. Since 1798, no sum whatever has been applied to commercial purposes, and the law has been violated in this single instance to a sum exceeding 8 millions. To this extent, and to this amount has this commercial nation been deprived of such an import from our colonies, which the law ordered and enjoined."

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### LORD CORNWALLIS'S SECOND INDIAN ADMINISTRATION.

*(July to October, 1805)*

Cornwallis arrived in Madras on the 19th of July and from there proceeded on his voyage to Bengal on the 23rd and arrived in Calcutta on July 29th and was sworn in on the following day. He found the affairs of the Company disorganised and the Treasury empty. The critical situation of the political affairs in India was thus described by him in his letter dated August 1st, 1805, to the Secret Committee :

Finding to my great concern that we are still at war with Holkar, and that we can hardly be said to be at peace with Scindhia, I have determined to proceed immediately to the upper provinces, that I may be at hand to avail myself of the interval which the present rainy season must occasion in the military operations, to endeavour, if it can be done without a sacrifice of our honour, to terminate by negotiation a contest in which the most brilliant success can afford us no solid benefit and which, if it should continue, must involve us in pecuniary difficulties, which we should hardly be able to surmount."

On the same day, he wrote to Lord Castlereagh :

"I entertain scarcely any hope that it will be in my power to come to an amicable accommodation with Scindhia, who still keeps the assistant of our Residency under restraint, as I understand that Lord Wellesley has guaranteed to the Rana of Gohud the supremacy which Scindhia claims over Gohud and the fortress of Gwalior.

"These possessions are too remote in my opinion to make it desirable for us to have anything to do with them, . . .

"My statements of our poverty are by no means overcharged, notwithstanding the former violent transactions in Oudh. Lord Wellesley has borrowed 20 lacs of the vizier, and has written to press him for 10 more. Our credit has, I believe, been tried to the utmost at Benares and other places."

Cornwallis left Calcutta on the 8th August and proceeded by the river to the Upper Provinces, with the intention of bringing about peace with the Maratha princess. It was the pecuniary difficulties which the British government had to experience at this time which compelled them to sue for peace.

Owing to the low state of finances, it is not surprising that Cornwallis tried to upset the political transactions of his predecessor. The Marquis Wellesley was congratulated on the success which had attended his intrigues in gaining possession of the person of Shah Alam. But regarding this possession Cornwallis thus wrote to Malcolm on the 14th August, 1805 :—

"I consider our possession of the person of Shah Allum and the town of Delhi as events truly unfortunate, and unless I should be able to persuade His Majesty to move further to the eastward, we can only secure him from the danger of being carried off, by the maintenance of a large army in the field, which will be an expense that our funds cannot bear. I deprecate the efforts of the almost universal frenzy, which has seized even some of the heads which I thought the soundest in the country, for conquest and victory, as opposite to the interests, as it is to the laws, of our country."



In his letter to Lake, dated Sept. 19th 1805, Cornwallis unfolded his plan of terminating disputes, and bringing about peace with the Maratha States of India. The letter is a long one, but it is so important, that the following extracts from it are given, as they express his views as to what he would have done had he lived a few months more. He wrote:

"The first and most important object of my attention is a satisfactory adjustment of all differences between the British Government and Dowlut Rao Scindhia, the principal obstacles to which appear to be—on the part of Scindhia, the release of the British Resident,—and on our part the cession to that chieftain of the fortress of Gwalior and the province of Gohud. I am aware of the disadvantages of immediately relinquishing, or even of compromising the demand which has been so repeatedly and so urgently made for the release of the British Resident; but I deem it proper to apprise your Lordship, that as a mere point of honour, I am disposed to compromise or even to abandon that demand, if it should ultimately prove to be the only obstacle to a satisfactory adjustment of affairs with Dowlut Rao Scindhia; and that I have hitherto been induced to support it by the apprehension that the motives of such a concession might be misinterpreted, and that it might lead to demands on the part of Scindhia, with which we could not comply without a sacrifice of dignity and interest incompatible with our security, and thereby render still more difficult of attainment the desirable object of a general pacification.

"With regard to the cession of Gwalior and Gohud, in my decided opinion it is desirable to abandon our possession of the former, and our connexion with the latter, independently of any reference to a settlement of differences with Dowlut Rao Scindhia. . . .

"But however desirous I am to relinquish our possession of Gwalior and our connexion with Gohud, it is not my intention to accede to the unconditional surrender of those places. . . .

"In conformity to the preceding observations, the following is the general plan of arrangement which I am desirous of concluding with Dowlut Rao Scindhia:

"1st. To make over to Scindhia the possession of Gwalior and Gohud.

"2nd. To transfer to him, according to the provisions of the treaty of peace, the districts of Dholpoor, Baree, and Rajkerree; and to account to Scindhia for the collections from those districts since the peace.

\* \* \* \* \*

"3rd. The eventual restoration of the Jeynagar (Jeypoor) tribute, amounting, I understand, to the annual sum of 8 lacs of rupees.

"4th. To require from Scindhia his consent to the abrogation of the pensions, and to the resumption of the jaghires in the Duab, established by the treaty of peace.

"5th. To require from Scindhia the relinquishment of his claim to the arrears of the pension.

"6th. To demand a compensation for the public and private losses sustained by the plunder of the Residency.

"7th. To require Scindhia to make a provision for the Rana of Gohud to the extent of 2½ or 3 lacs of rupees per annum, which I should conceive to be amply sufficient.

\* \* \* \* \*

"With regard to Scindhia's own expectations of obtaining the grant of a portion of the territory conquered from Holkar by the British arms, Your Lordship is apprised of my inclination to restore the whole of those conquests to Holkar; Your Lordship, therefore, will not encourage any such expectation on the part of Scindhia.

\* \* \* \* \*

"From the tenor of the communications which I have received relative to the views and disposition of Dowlut Rao Scindhia, there is every reason to believe that, if assured of the

cession of Gwalior and Gohud, he would be ready, not only to open a negotiation with the British Government for the adjustment of other points, but also to comply with the demand which has hitherto been declared to be an indispensable preliminary to any negotiation. . . . . But being anxious to remove every obstacle to the proposed negotiation, and being resolved eventually to cede to Scindhia the possession of Gwalior and Gohud, I am not aware of any material objection to a candid declaration to Scindhia of my intentions in his favour, on the condition of his separation from Holkar, and his compliance with the demand for the release of the British Resident. . . . . I have deemed it advisable to combine with a declaration to that effect, a statement of the general principles of policy by which I am desirous of regulating the conduct of the British Government towards all the states of India. I am anxious to promulgate those principles, with a view to restore to the native states that confidence in the justice and moderation of the British Government, which past events have considerably impaired, and which appears to me to be essential to the security and tranquility of the Company's dominions. . . . .

"I now proceed to state to Your Lordship the plan which occurs to me for the disposal of the territory to the westward and southward of Delhi, without assigning any portion of it to Dowlut Rao Scindhia.

"The plan which I propose is to assign from it, jaghires to the several chiefs who have joined our cause, and for whom, with the irregular troops under their command, we are bound to provide, and to divide the remainder between the Rajas of Machery and Bhurtpure."

Such were the measures which Cornwallis contemplated to adopt towards the Maratha princes to settle the disputes with them. Had he lived a few months more, he would have been able to carry his views into execution.

Cornwallis, on his arrival in Calcutta, found that the army had not received any pay for several months. Writing to Castlereagh, on Aug. 9, 1805, he said :

"Lake's army, the pay of which amounts to about five lacs per month, is above five months in arrear. An army of irregulars, composed chiefly of deserters from the enemy, which with the approbation of Government, the general assembled by proclamation, and which costs about six lacs per month, is likewise somewhat in arrear."

If the troops were not immediately paid, he saw the danger of mutiny. Money had to be found, but how to do it ? In the letter to Lord Castlereagh referred to above, he wrote :

"How . . . . . an army to be kept together with an empty treasury ? For the next two months we can expect nothing from the Collectors, and our only dependence is on the small supply of bullion sent from England."

Not expecting any aid from England, Cornwallis hit on the expediency of taking the bullion out of the ships at Madras which were destined for China, and also to reduce the number of troops. But what he intended to do would not perhaps have met with the approval of the home authorities, for in 1791, the Directors of the Company thought that such a procedure interfered with their pecuniary advantages as merchants. To convince those cold and calculating men in authority that such a step would not affect their pecuniary interests, he wrote to the Court of Directors on the 9th August, 1805 :

"You may be assured, that if the provision of your full investment from China could be affected in any degree by the consequences of the measure I have adopted, I should have preferred struggling through our difficulties under every possible disadvantage, rather than have subjected you to the disappointment which an insufficiency of funds in China might have occasioned, but upon the fullest information I can obtain of the present state of the trade between the ports of

India and Canton, it is evident it will only require that permission should be given to your select committee there to extend the receipt of money for bills on Bengal to an amount equivalent to the treasure detained at Madras ; and such is the astonishing increase of the exports from India, especially in the articles of opium and cotton from this place, within these few years, that there can not be a doubt of the amplest supplies being tendered for their acceptance, the experience of last year having proved that offers of money exceeded the demands of your treasury there to the amount of near forty lacs of rupees, and as the exports of the present year are increased, even beyond those of the last, there can be as little doubt of an equal abundant resource being open this season, to the acceptance of your supercargoes at Canton."

He informed the Court of Directors that "this treasure has already had some effect in lowering the discount upon the paper."

Cornwallis and Lake had served in Ireland and helped to bring about the Union of that country with Great Britain.

He must have remembered the abominable deeds perpetrated by Lake in Ireland to provoke the natives of that country to rebellion. The task of pacifying Ireland fell to the lot of Cornwallis. In one of his letters, Cornwallis thus described the state of affairs in Ireland when he went there as Lord Lieutenant of the country. He wrote :

"On my arrival in this country I put a stop to the burning of houses and murder of the inhabitants by the yeomen, or any other persons who delighted in that amusement ; to the flogging for the purpose of extorting confession ; and to the free quarters, which comprehend universal rape and robbery throughout the whole country."

It should be remembered that Lake was then in Ireland as the Commander-in-Chief and all these atrocities by the yeomen were committed with his connivance, if not by his actual orders. Cornwallis, moreover, knew from his experience in Ireland that Lake was not a tactician, or a skilful general. He was, also, fully acquainted with the nature of Lake as a "truculent ruffian." It was not considered safe by him that Lake should continue to exercise the powers which had been vested in him by Wellesley. Cornwallis came out in the dual capacity of Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief. He made Lake understand that the latter was no longer the supreme head of the army in India or the sole arbiter of the fates of the princes in Hindustan with whom he made war. The first official letter which he penned in India the very day he was sworn in was addressed to Lake, to whom he wrote :

"I have this day taken upon me the office of Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief, and I lose no time in acquainting you with my intention of proceeding up the country in a very few days. . . . . I should wish that you would not engage in any act of aggression, unless it might appear to be necessary in order to secure your own army from *serious* danger, until I can come to you, or you can have further communication with me."

This letter from Cornwallis came as a thunder-bolt from the blue to Lake, who only five days previously (*i.e.*, on 25th July) was told by the Governor-General in Council that

"Great danger must inevitably be produced by our abstaining from the prosecution of hostilities at the earliest practicable period of time.

"In conformity to these sentiments, the Governor-General in Council now authorizes and directs your Excellency to be prepared to commence active operations against the confederated

forces as soon as the season will admit, and the Governor-General in Council requests that your Excellency will transmit with the least practicable delay a plan of operations for the eventual prosecution of hostilities in every quarter of Hindustan and the Deccan."

But Cornwallis's letter put an end to Lake's ambition of winning the laurels and glories of war. He was opposed to the policy of Cornwallis, because he had adopted the views of Wellesley. It was, therefore, natural for him to have remonstrances with the new Governor-General, who had, it seemed to him, usurped his appointment of Commander-in-Chief of India and so he thought his occupation was gone. To smooth the ruffled feelings of that "truculent ruffian," the aged Marquis wrote to him several conciliatory letters. But he firmly told him that he should obey his command. Writing to him on September 1, 1805, he said :

"Nothing could make me believe that you would be induced to deviate in the slightest degree from any of my views while acting under my command."

In another long letter, dated September 19, which occupies nearly nine printed pages of the Cornwallis Correspondence, the Governor-General gave his views to Lake on the political affairs of India.

But nothing that Cornwallis did or said seemed to pacify Lake, who intended to resign his command in India and return to England. The last letter which Cornwallis wrote while alive was the one addressed to Lake, dated 23rd September, 1805. He commenced the letter as follows :

"It would be difficult to describe to you the feelings of regret and concern that have been produced on my mind, by the receipt of Your Lordship's public and and private letters of the 13th instant . . . . . especially after the full persuasion I had been impressed with, of the thorough cordiality with which you had contemplated my arrival in India in the stations of Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief.

"Your Lordship well knows that I have never yet accepted a civil government to which the military authority was not also annexed. . . . .

"I wish, before you take any decisive steps in regard to a return to Europe, that you would as candidly and freely explain to me, my dear Lord, the ideas which you had formed of the powers and authority intended to be vested in you, . . . . ."

There can be little doubt that the uncompromising attitude of Lake preyed on the mind of Cornwallis and hastened his death. He died at Ghazipur, where his remains were interred and over which a handsome mausoleum has been erected by public subscription in India.

Cornwallis died without attaining any of the objects for the accomplishment of which he had been sent out for a second time to India.

His second tenure of office was not even of three months' duration. He was not able to either effect any reform or commit any mischief in the administration of India. The situation of political affairs in India stood exactly as left by the Marquess Wellesley on his departure from India. But there can be no doubt that the pacific intention and conciliatory spirit exhibited by Cornwallis had considerable effect in smoothing and paving the way towards bringing about peace with the Maratha princes.

## CHAPTER XL

### SIR GEORGE BARLOW'S ADMINISTRATION

( 1805-1807 )

#### THE TERMINATION OF THE SECOND MARATHA WAR AND PEACE WITH THE MARATHAS.

The war which the Marquess Wellesley had begun with the Marathas did not end in peace with his departure from India. As said before, had he remained a few months longer in India, the war would have been renewed with redoubled vigour and it is not known when and how it would have ended. But the Marquess Cornwallis's arrival in India and the declaration of his pacific intentions paved the way towards peace and cessation of hostilities. Lake was opposed to the views of Cornwallis. So the death of Cornwallis was hailed with joy by Lake, not only on public, but private considerations also, since as said before, under Cornwallis the business of Lake as Commander-in-Chief in India was gone. Lake now abandoned his intention of returning to Europe.

The death of Cornwallis brought Sir George Barlow, the senior member of the Council, to the office of Governor-General of India. Barlow was an apt pupil of the Marquess Wellesley, and was one of those fire-brands who preferred war to peace. On a previous page it has already been mentioned how his views made Wellesley decide to declare hostilities against the Maratha States. The financial situation and pressure from home were the considerations which had made, for a moment at least, the Marquess Wellesley hesitate to declare war with Sindhia and the Raja of Berar, but the advocacy of Barlow, not for peace but for the shedding of blood, egged on the Governor-General in his scheme of robbery, bloodshed and murder. Barlow as acting Governor-General could not carry on the policy of Lord Wellesley, because the Government and general public in England had already declared their opposition to it, and also the empty treasury would not permit him to do so. Nevertheless, he seems to have adopted a dishonest and dishonourable, mean and contemptible policy towards the native states of India, which will be presently referred to.

The junction of Holkar and Sindhia was not liked at all by the servants of the Company; they were naturally anxious to divide the interests of these two Maratha chieftains and thus dissolve their union. Cornwallis saw how this could be brought about. His views expressed in his letter to Lake under date of 19th September, 1805, clearly show how he had proposed to separate Sindhia from Holkar.

In the history of this period written by the English the separation of Holkar from Sindhia does not seem to have been properly explained. But it appears to us that the pacific intentions of Lord Cornwallis had some effect in inducing Sindhia to separate himself from Holkar. The latter had once played the Maratha Confederates false and did not join them, nay, even betrayed them, when they were at war with

the English. Consequently, Sindhia could not trust Holkar, however sincere the latter might have been, at this moment, in his professions.

The arrival of Cornwallis in India must have inspired Sindhia with hope for the reparation, partial at least, of those wrongs and injuries which the Marquess Wellesley had inflicted upon him. It is true that, although requested to do so, Lake did not formally communicate to Sindhia the views of the Governor-General for the settlement of the disputes expressed in his letter of the 19th September, 1805. But there are strong reasons for thinking that in an informal manner these views of Lord Cornwallis had been communicated to Sindhia, who had been led to believe that his separation from Holkar would mend matters and procure for him all those objects for which he was meditating war with the English. Our conjecture derives support from the fact that Munshi Kavel Nyne was chosen by them as the medium for bringing about peace with Sindhia. A few words regarding this Munshi are necessary to be stated here. He seems to have been a native of Northern India, presumably of Kashmir. He was in the employ of Sindhia, on whose behalf he had signed the Treaty of Peace concluded with the British towards the end of 1803. From the fact that he was very favourably inclined towards the English it is not unreasonable to suppose that he had been bribed by them to betray the interests of his master.

When Holkar, coming out of Bharatpur, joined Sindhia, and when from this junction there was every likelihood of the outbreak of war between the Marathas and the English, Kavel Nyne left his master and found shelter under the English Government at Delhi. His desertion from Sindhia is thus alluded to by Mr. Mill :

"Moonshee Kavel Nyne was one of the confidential servants of Scindhia, who had been opposed to Serjee Rao Gautka, and of course leaned to the British interests. During the ascendancy of Serjee Rao Gautka, Moonshee Kavel Nyne, from real or apprehended dread of violence, had fled from the dominions of Scindhia, and had taken shelter under the British Government at Delhi."<sup>\*</sup>

The words put in italics in the above extract naturally confirm our suspicion already expressed above that this Munshi Kavel Nyne was in the pay of the British to betray the interests of his master.

This was the man whom the British had chosen to be their medium to bring about peace between them and Sindhia, and, it must be admitted that he served them very well indeed. Although Lake had not communicated in a formal manner to Sindhia the proposals which Cornwallis had thought would settle the disputes, yet there are strong grounds to believe that in an informal manner, Sindhia had been acquainted with the pacific intentions of the new Governor-General, and given to understand that all the possessions of which he had been deprived by the Marquess Wellesley would be restored to him provided he would separate himself from Holkar. Sindhia as yet was not fully acquainted with the nature of the servants of the Company with whom he had to deal. And it is probable that he was easily ensnared by their smooth promises. Had not Cornwallis met with his death in such an

\* VI., 457.

unexpected manner, there is every probability that more generous treatment would have been accorded to Sindhia.

It is also probable that Holkar must have been, in an informal manner, acquainted with the intentions of Cornwallis, namely, that all the possessions conquered from him would be restored to him, provided he would cease hostilities. But once bit, twice shy. Holkar knew fully well the perfidious nature of the servants of the Company. He had no longer any faith in their smooth promises.

That intrigues had been carried on by the English with Munshi Kavel Nyne to persuade Sindhia to separate himself from Holkar would be evident from what Mill wrote regarding these transactions. He says :

"Upon the first intimation, from the new Governor-General to the Commander-in-Chief, of the altered tone of politics which was about to be introduced, Moonshee Kavel Nyne was invited to the camp of the Commander-in-Chief, where it was concerted, that one of his relations should speak to Scindhia, and explain to him the facility with which, through the medium of Moonshee Kavel Nyne, he might open a negotiation, calculated to save him from the dangers with which he was encompassed."

These pacific intentions of Cornwallis then made Sindhia dissolve the union with Holkar. The latter now had to go and find an asylum somewhere else. Homeless, friendless and penniless, it speaks much to the credit of Holkar that he did not lose presence of mind and surrender himself to the English or sue for peace with them. Early in the month of September, Holkar left Ajmere and directed his steps towards the Panjab, giving out his expectation of being joined by the Sikh chiefs and even by the King of Kabul. This expectation on the part of Holkar was quite reasonable when we remember the circumstances of the times. The King of Kabul had threatened the British with an invasion of India. The Panjab was still, if not actually, at least nominally, subject to Kabul. The Sikhs were, therefore, the subjects of the Kabul sovereign. It was, therefore, natural for Holkar to expect assistance from the Sikhs. But in this he was disappointed. He was not at that time acquainted with the fact of the intrigues of the English with the Sikh Chieftains of the Panjab, persuading them to throw off their allegiance to the King of Kabul on the one hand, and not to lend a helping hand to the Marathas on the other.

It was after the death of Cornwallis that the Treaty of Peace was finally concluded with Sindhia. He had fallen into the trap laid for him by the servants of the Company, and, having separated from Holkar, it was impossible for him to get out of the trap. Regarding the re-employment of Kavel Nyne by Sindhia, Mill writes :

"Scindhia was eager to embrace the expedient, and immediately sent proposals through the medium of Kavel Nyne. By this contrivance the British commander stood upon the vantage ground, and stated, that he could attend to no proposition while the British Residency was detained."†

There was no other alternative left for Sindhia but to submit to be dictated by the English. Accordingly, he had to dismiss the Residency. Cornwallis having died, Barlow became the Governor-General of India. He did not offer such liberal terms to Sindhia

\* Vol. vi., p. 457.

† Vol. vi., p. 458.

as his predecessor had intended. The treaty was concluded and signed on the 23rd November, 1805, under the auspices of Lake. It was signed on the part of Sindhia by Munshi Kavel Nyne, and on the part of the English by Malcolm. By this Treaty, several items of the previous Treaty, that is, the one concluded through General Wellesley at Surjee Anjengaum, were modified. There was no longer to be any defensive or subsidiary alliance between the English and Sindhia. Gwalior and the province of Gohud were likewise ceded to him. Lake, during the negotiations preceding the signature of the above Treaty, had left his station in the Upper Provinces and was marching in pursuit of Holkar, whom at last he overtook on the banks of the Beas. Holkar, as said before, did not obtain any help from the Sikhs. Ranjit Singh, who was the principal chief of the Sikhs in the Panjab at this time, did not afford any assistance to Holkar. A story is well-known in the Panjab how Holkar beseeched and entreated Ranjit Singh to make common cause with him and fight the English. The chief of the Sikhs not only turned a deaf ear to Holkar's appeals and entreaties, but advised him to go and place himself at their mercy for the restoration of his dominion. This Sikh Chief was no far-seeing statesman. Had he been so, he would not have intrigued with the English and helped them in dismembering the Maratha Empire. The rise of the Sikh monarchy in the Panjab, was, owing to political expediency, brought about by the English, in whose hands Ranjit Singh was more or less a puppet. Writing to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, in the Despatch, dated 25th September, 1803, the Governor-General in Council said:

"Raja Runjeet Sing, the Raja of Lahore and the principal amongst the Sikh chieftains, has transmitted proposals to the Commander-in-Chief for the transfer of the territory belonging to that nation south of the river Sutledge, on the condition of mutual defence against the respective enemies of that chieftain and of the British nation."

From this, it is quite evident then, that the English were mainly instrumental in the subsequent rise of Ranjit Singh. It was this expectation of aid from them which led Ranjit Singh to stand aloof and not come to the rescue of the Marathas when they had been most unjustly and aggressively attacked by the English. In his 'secret and official' letter dated 2nd August, 1803, the Marquess Wellesley wrote to Lake:

"Your Excellency has anticipated my opinion with respect to the expediency of endeavouring to obtain the co-operation of the principal chiefs of the tribe of Sikhs, in the approaching contest with the Maratha power.

"I understand, that Rajah Runjeet Sing, the Rajah of Lahore, is considered to be the principal among the chiefs of the tribe of Sikhs, and to possess considerable influence over the whole body of Sikh chiefs.

"In the year 1800 the Resident with Dowlut Rao Scindhia, by my direction, despatched a confidential agent to the principal chiefs, for the purpose of persuading them to unite in opposing the apprehended invasion of Zamaun Shah and of conciliating them to the interests of the British Government.

"Adverting to the great distance of Lahore from the scene of intended operations, the only



support to be expected from Raja Runjeet Singh, is the exertion of his influence with the other Sikh chieftains, to induce them to favor the cause of the British Government.

\* \* \* \*

"If it should appear impracticable to obtain the co-operation of those chieftains, it would still be an object of importance to secure their neutrality.

"In your communications to the Sikh Chieftains, it may be proper that your Excellency should suggest to their consideration the danger to which they will hereafter be exposed by any opposition to the interests of the British Government, and the advantages which they may derive from a connection with so powerful a state."

The rise of the Sikh monarchy in the Panjab under Ranjit Singh was due to the break-up of the Maratha Empire, for, in all probability, there would have been no Sikh monarchy, had not the Sikhs remained neutral, or even afforded help to the English in a clandestine manner when the Marathas were in their death struggle with them. Taking all these facts into consideration, it is not to be surprised at, that Holkar met with very scant hospitality at the hands of the future so-called Lion of the Panjab. Chivalry and knightly gallantry enjoining the grant of aid to weak and helpless men never entered largely into the character of the Sikh chiefs of the Panjab in the beginning of the 19th century. How does the character of the Jat Prince Ranjit Singh of Bharatpur compare with that of the Sikh Chief Ranjit Singh of the Panjab? The one afforded asylum to the destitute Holkar and carried out the laws of Oriental hospitality by making common cause with him and did not shrink from incurring the wrath of the English and exposing his dominions to their unjust and aggressive attack. The other in order to curry favor with them showed very cold shoulders to a refugee whom he should have, had he been true to the traditions of Oriental hospitality, not only afforded protection, but tried to meet his wishes by fighting the English as had done his namesake of Bharatpur.

When Holkar discovered he could not get any assistance from Ranjit Singh and other Sikh Chiefs of the Panjab, he had no other alternative than that of coming to terms with the English. To have gone to Kabul and asked the assistance of its ruler appeared to him to be a wild goose chase. He could not have done so, as the Sikh Chiefs in the Panjab would have certainly intercepted his going.\* Mill writes :

"Totally disappointed in his hopes of assistance from the Sikh Chiefs, and reduced at last to the extremity of distress, he (Holkar) sent agents, with an application for peace, to the British camp."†

Lake was then on the banks of the river Beas and it is probable that he had made Ranjit Singh acquainted with the terms on which peace was to be concluded with Holkar, and asked him to persuade that Maratha Chieftain to send agents to his camp.

\* Besides, it was quite impossible for the king of Kabul to have rendered any assistance in either men or money to Holkar. Afghanistan was at this time the scene of internecine feuds, domestic dissensions, bloodshed, murder and anarchy. All these were brought about through the machinations of the English. The Marquess Wellesley had, in 1799, despatched the well-known Sir John (at that time only Captain) Malcolm to Persia to instigate its ruler to send emissaries to Afghanistan to stir up dissensions, discords and disturbances in that country. The success which attended the exertions of the English exceeded all their expectations. So had Holkar gone to Kabul, he would not only have been disappointed, but in all probability his kingdom would have been annexed by the British.

† Vi., p. 466.

There is nothing improbable in this supposition, especially when we remember the fact of the intrigues that the British had so secretly carried on with the Sikhs since some years past.\*

Holkar sent his agents to Lake's camp and on the 24th of December, 1805, a treaty was signed on the terms which Cornwallis had proposed. All his territories on the southern side of the rivers Tapti and Godavery, which the English had conquered, were restored to him. There were certain other articles in this Treaty to which we need not refer here.

Thus after all ended the second Maratha War. It showed the English the strong as well as the weak points in the Maratha character. It was the determined policy of the Marquess Wellesley to annihilate the Maratha Chiefs and their military resources, together with their international independence. He was only partially successful. He could not altogether annihilate them. Their military resources were to a great extent crippled, as well as their international independence. The Marquess Wellesley tried to draw within the octopodian arms of his co-religionists and compatriots all the Maratha States by forging on them the fetters of the subsidiary alliance. With the exception of the Peshwa, no other Maratha State was drawn into the abominable scheme of the subsidiary or so-called defensive alliance. But all the Maratha princes, the Peshwa, Sindhia the Raja of Berar and Holkar—were most unjustly deprived of some of their most fertile provinces. That was the sum-total of the Second Maratha War.

Barlow, who succeeded Lord Cornwallis as Governor-General of India, was, as said before, trained in the school of diplomacy of the Marquess Wellesley, whose policy was to obtain political power in India by reducing the native princes to the position of mere figure-heads by imposing on them his scheme of subsidiary alliance. But now, his scheme was knocked on the head. Cornwallis was opposed to it, for after all, it landed the Company into costly, though not quite unprofitable wars. The low state of the finances of the East India Company would not allow Barlow to revive it or keep it going. He, therefore, considered it a matter of great political expediency to obtain the power of playing off one chief against the other. The princes of Rajputana had rendered assistance to the British during their war with the Marathas.

\* In the autobiography of Amir Khan (p. 286) is related the manner in which Lord Lake made the world believe that it was Holkar who sued for peace and not the British. There we find it stated :

"In the meantime, General Lake advancing from Karnal came to Puteeala, and thence to the Sutluj, where he encamped under a fort. Leaving his baggage with a rear guard there, he marched again with his army, lightly equipped, to Suwae Jullundur. The Council at Calcutta had written to urge the General to offer terms, and bring the war to an end as soon as possible. And the General saw himself that, if Runjeet Sing with the Puteeala Chief and other Sardars of this country, were to make common cause with the Maharaj (Holkar), a new flame would be lighted up, which it would be difficult to extinguish. He accordingly determined to follow his instructions in this respect, and with that view looked out for an intelligent skilful negotiator to be sent to Holkar's camp, and to be made the channel for an overture, in such guise that the Maharaj (Holkar) should be brought to sue for peace, and negotiations commence on that basis," . . . ". Then Amir Khan describes the intrigues of General Lake in making it appear to all that it was Holkar who sued for peace.

They had been promised protection by the Marquess Wellesley and his agent Lake. In the defensive alliance with them it was guaranteed to them, that in the event of their being attacked by any one, the British Government of India would come to their rescue and afford them help to fight their enemies. But Barlow withdrew this defensive alliance from them, and tried to play off one against the other. His was the most ultra-Machiavellian policy for the extension and consolidation of the power of his countrymen in India.

Barlow's policy would never have been known to the outside world but for Sir John Malcolm. "Set a thief to catch a thief," is an old saw. Malcolm's political creed was no better than that of Barlow, and he would have never exposed him, but for the injuries he had received at his hand while Barlow was Governor of Madras. In his "Political History of India," Malcolm has very thoroughly exposed the dishonest and contemptible policy of Barlow. To quote the words of Malcolm, it was

*"a policy, which declaredly looks to the disputes and wars of its neighbours, as one of the chief sources of its security; and which, if it does not directly excite such wars, shapes its political relations with inferior states in a manner calculated to create and continue them."*

This policy was adopted by Barlow because the British Government of India were reduced to great pecuniary difficulties and were therefore unable to undertake wars for extension of their political power.

Regarding this policy of Barlow, Metcalfe wrote :

"The Governor-General in some of his dispatches, distinctly says that he contemplates in the discord of the native powers, an additional source of strength; and, if I am not mistaken, some of his plans go directly and *are designed* to foment discord among those states.

"But I can contemplate no source of strength in the discords of contiguous powers. It appears to me that in our advanced state of power no great contentions can arise which will not soon reach and entangle us. It is impossible completely to insulate ourselves, and we must be subject to the same chances which work upon states situated as we are."\*

Barlow was not popular with the services. According to Lord Minto, Barlow's merits were the cause of his unpopularity. In a letter to Hon. Gilbert Elliott, dated Calcutta, September 15, 1807, Lord Minto wrote :

"He (Barlow) is not popular, and I believe his merits may have been the cause of it, or at least one among others. In truth, a Company's servant raised to the commanding height above his fellows which the Governor-General holds here, excites envy rather than respect or love. They are all comparing themselves with him, and their own pretensions with him."†

\* *The Policy of Sir George Barlow*, from Kaye's Selections from the papers of Lord Metcalfe, p. 7.

† Countess of Minto's *Lord Minto in India*.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### THE MUTINY AT VELLORE.

(10th July, 1806).

The Christian servants of the East India Company, seeing the manner in which the Indian principalities were easily subverted, grew bolder and thought that the non-Christian religions of India also could be easily subverted by them. Marquess Wellesley was the pioneer in this direction. With this object in view he established the College at Fort William, Calcutta.

The Madras Presidency has always been suitable for the thriving of Christianity. The persecuted Nestorian Christians found an asylum there. St. Xavier and those who followed in his wake worked more successfully there than anywhere else in India. It is hence that the "benighted" presidency of Madras shows more native Christians than any other part of India.

Amongst the Christian officers serving out in India, some have always been great zealots in the cause of proselytism and tried to bring the "heathens" from darkness into light. They left no stone unturned to carry their scheme into execution.\*

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Governor, Lord William Bentinck, and the Commander-in-Chief, Sir John Craddock of the Madras Presidency, with their zeal for so-called reforms, if not for proselytism, tried to ride rough-shod over the religious and social scruples of the Sepoys in that presidency without paying any heed to their feelings and sentiments. The "cunning despotism" which, to quote the words of Herbert Spencer, used "native soldiers to maintain and extend native subjection," was to be used to make India a Christian country. Certain innovations were introduced in the dress and social usages of the Sepoys by order of the Commander-in-Chief with the sanction of the Governor, but without consulting the native officers and men of the Madras Army.

The family members of Tipu were kept State prisoners at Vellore, a place well fortified and well garrisoned by British and native troops to keep those State prisoners in awe from committing any mischief to the Company's Government. It was at Vellore that the sepoy rose in arms and tried to make short work of the Christian officers and men stationed there. About 2 a. m. of 10th July, 1806, the sepoy assembled at the Main Guard and surrounded the residence of their commanding officer, Colonel Fancourt, who was awakened with a loud firing. When coming out of his house to quell the disturbance and when he was exerting himself under a very heavy fire, he was mortally wounded and died that evening at 4. But the mutiny was easily put down and the mutineers punished. As usual, a mixed commission

\* See the Chapter on "Christianisation in India" in my work on "The Consolidation of the Christian Power in India."

was appointed to inquire into the causes of the Mutiny. The Civil Servants of the Company attributed it to the absurd and foolish military measures; while the military officers regarded it as a conspiracy in favour of the sons of Tipu, who were therefore removed from Vellore to Bengal.

There can be little doubt that the outbreak was due to the novel and absurd military measures introduced in the Sepoy Army. The Sepoy was ordered

"not (to) mark his face to denote his caste, or wear earrings, when dressed in his uniform; and it is further directed that at all parades, and upon all duties, every soldier of the battalion shall be clean shaved on the chin. It is directed also that uniformity shall be preserved in regard to the quantity and shape of the hair upon the upper lip, as far as may be practicable."

Both the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief were justly punished by being recalled from their offices. The Bengal Government were satisfied of the highly good conduct of the sons and other family members of Tipu Sultan and exculpated them from the charge of exciting the mutiny and granted them every indulgence. The news of the Mutiny at Vellore, when received in England after several months of its occurrence, produced great panic there. The natives of that country attributed it to the attempts of the authorities at the conversion of India. Revd. Sydney Smith wrote in the *Edinburgh Review* for 1807 on *The Conversion of India*, in which he tried to show how the Civil Servants of the Company were giving encouragement to the missionaries to propagate their faith and proselytise the swarthy heathens. He wrote :

"In 1804, the *Missionary Society*, a recent institution, sent a new mission to the coast of Coromandel, from whose papers we think it right to lay before our readers the following extracts :

"March 31st, 1805.—Waited on A. B. He says *Government seems to be very willing to forward our views*. We may stay at Madras as long as we please; and when we intend to go into the country, on our application to the Governor by letter, he would issue orders for granting us passports which would supersede the necessity of a public petition :—Lords Day."

It should be borne in mind that the Governor referred to above was Lord William Bentinck. Revd. Mr. Sydney Smith wrote further that the missionaries "obtain their passports from Government, and the plan and objects of their mission are printed, free of expense, at the Government press..." In another Number, the Missionaries write thus to the Society of London, about a fortnight before the massacre at Vellore :

"Every encouragement is offered us by the established Government of the country. Hitherto they have granted us every request, whether solicited by ourselves or others. Their permission to come to this place, their allowing us an acknowledgment for preaching in the fort which sanctions us in our work, together with the grant which they have lately given us to hold a large spot of ground every way suited for missionary labours, are objects of the last importance, and remove every impediment which might be apprehended from this source. We trust not to an arm of flesh; but when we reflect on these things, we cannot but behold the loving kindness of the Lord."

In a letter of the same date we learn from Brother Ringletanbe the following fact :

"The Dewan of Travancore sent me word that if I despatched one of our Christians to him he would give me leave to build a church at Magilandy. Accordingly, I shall send in a short time. For this important service our Society is indebted alone to Colonel—, without whose determined and fearless interposition none of their missionaries would have been able to set a foot in that country."

It is not necessary to quote any further from Mr. Smith's article. Bentinck and his compatriots in authority in India were doing everything in their power to encourage the missionaries with the aim of the conversion of the 'heathens.'

One Abbe Dubois was a Roman Catholic priest who came out to the Madras Presidency when Lord William Bentinck was its Governor. It may be, that under his dictation, the priest wrote that notorious book named *Hindu Customs, Manners and Ceremonies*. The Governor purchased the MS, written in French, for 8000 Rupees in 1807, for the East India Company, who bestowed on the author a special pension for it. Dubois' work was the precursor of Miss Katherine Mayo's "Mother India," for that priest abused the Hindus in no measured terms.\* Professor C. S. Srinivasachari's account of Dubois appears in Indian Historical Records Commission, Vol. IX.

The Mutiny at Vellore occurred during the Governor-Generalship of Sir George Barlow. Although he was expecting to be confirmed in that office, for he had the support of the East India Company, he was greatly disappointed at being superseded by Lord Minto, who was appointed by the Ministry to that post. However, as a solatium, Sir George Barlow was made Governor of Madras in place of Lord William Bentinck, who was recalled.

\* See *The Modern Review* for October 1927, pp. 486-487.

## CHAPTER XLII

### THE FIRST LORD MINTO'S ADMINISTRATION

( 1807-1813 A. D. )

The unjust and aggressive war on the Maratha princes commenced by the Marquess Wellesley had been brought to a close in a manner not reflecting much credit either on the valour or on the diplomatic skill of the European soldiers or administrators then in India. The retreat of the troops under the command of Monson before Holkar, Lake's repeated failures in reducing the fort of Bharatpur, the restoration of the fortress of Gwalior and the province of Gohud to Sindhia, and finally, the restoration of his territories and possessions to Jaswant Rao Holkar, did not certainly raise the prestige of the European generals and administrators in India. The Marquess Wellesley had also pressed the Maratha princes to accept his nefarious scheme of Subsidiary Alliance. But excepting the Peshwa, no other Maratha prince,—neither Sindhia nor Holkar nor even the Raja of Berar, was willing to place this yoke on his own neck.\*

The sum total, then, of the Second Maratha War was this; that the Raja of Berar and Sindhia were made to part with some of their fertile provinces, but they did not lose their independence and were not reduced to the position of feudatory princes, like the Nizam or the Peshwa, under the protection of the British Government of India. Holkar also was very fortunate, since he neither lost his independence nor any portion of his territory.

The British were then having a very critical time in India. The charm of their military supremacy was a thing of the past. They were the laughing stock of all the independent states of India. † Then their throwing overboard the princes of Rajputana,

\* British prestige in India had indeed fallen to a very low ebb, and it is necessary to go back to the expedition against the Marathas undertaken in the regime of Warren Hastings to find a parallel to the heavy blow which had been struck at British dominion in India. The ambitious designs of the Europeans had been frustrated.

† Lord Minto, in his secret and separate general letter dated May 16, 1808, to the Directors of the East India Company, concerning the disposition of the native states, wrote :

"We have every reason to believe that all the states of India are satisfied of our disinclination to extend our dominions or to invade their rights, and of our solicitude to maintain peace. But those states of which the power and dominion have been abridged, or of which the influence has been circumscribed and against which the field of ambition and enterprise has been closed by the political position of the British power and ascendancy in India, cannot reasonably be supposed to entertain that sense of common interest with the British Government which should induce them to prefer the security of their actual condition to the alluring prospect of restored possessions, consequence, and authority. And demonstrations of the dangers to which their authority and

especially the Rana of Gohud, who had rendered them assistance in their hour of need and without whose help they would have, in all probability, been swept out of the country, not only amounted to base ingratitude but bad faith of a diabolical character. Of course their designs regarding the native states, given expression to by Barlow, already referred to in Chapter XL, were not then known to the ruling princes of India.

The inhabitants of the territories then under the administration of the British Company were groaning under the pressure of taxation imposed on them. Not only did India pay for all the wars which enabled the British to establish their empire, but all the surplus revenue of India was drained out of the country to pay dividends to the merchants constituting the East India Company. Even a writer of such liberal sentiments as James Mill, the well-known author of an Indian History, did not feel ashamed to say :

"The financial results of the operations of Government from the close of the first administration of the Marquis Cornwallis, till the present remarkable era, (i.e., 1806), should now be adduced. As regards the British nation, it is in these results that the good or evil of its operations in India is wholly to be found. *If India affords a surplus revenue which can be sent to England, thus far is India beneficial to England.*"\*

But the wars which the Marquess Wellesley carried on, did not afford a surplus revenue which could be sent to England. It was on that account that the Directors of the East India Company in England ordered their Governor-General in India to cease from war, and on his persisting in it, they were obliged to order his recall from India.

When Lord Minto arrived in India, the finances of the Government were tottering under the burden imposed upon them by the Maratha war.†

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independence would be exposed by the ambition of France would have little weight when opposed to the assurance of restoration to the dominion they have lost.

"With states of another description, engagements of co-operation might no doubt be formed, provided these engagements should not involve obligations of defensive alliance against all enemies. Of such alliances there is too much reason to doubt the efficiency and policy."

\* Vol. VI. p. 471.

† Lord Minto left England for India in December, 1806 and assumed the reins of Government at Calcutta on July 3, 1807. He was a friend of Burke. Lady Minto in her work on Lord Minto in India writes :—

"Lord Minto's early and intimate connection with Burke was the keynote of his political career. For that great man he formed an enthusiastic affection which was returned with so much tenderness and confidence that, when indulging after long years in a retrospect of their old friendship, he was able to say, 'I believe I was among those whom Burke loved best, and most trusted.'

It was no doubt due to Sir Gilbert's ardent sympathy with the views and the labours of his friend that in 1782 he was designated as one of the seven Parliamentary Directors (the seven kings, as they were called) to be appointed under the provisions of Mr. Fox's India Bill.

"The measure was lost, and as with it collapsed the ministry and the reign of the Whig party, the honour was a barren one : but his first appearance on the political stage in a leading part was nevertheless destined to be connected with the interests of India. Two sessions had passed since he and Mirabeau stood together at the Bar of the House of Commons to listen to the great tribune



Such was the critical situation of the British during the latter half of the first decade of the nineteenth century. Their prestige as a military nation was at its lowest ebb, their treasuries were empty and their public credit was shaken.

Lord Minto had to devise means for the defence of India. It should be remembered that at the time of which we are taking note, there was the possibility of rebellion of the inhabitants in the territories under the administration of the Europeans as well as of invasion of those territories by the independent powers of India, and possibly also by the sovereign of Afghanistan. Lord Minto fully understood the position and took measures to avert the dangers which stared the Europeans in the face. It is necessary to describe the measures adopted by him, which saved the expulsion of his co-religionists and compatriots from India.

First of all, there was the possibility, as said before, of the inhabitants of those territories which were then under the administration of the British, rising in arms against the alien usurpers of their rights and independence, and driving them out of the country. To prevent this contingency arising the Europeans acted on the maxim of *divide et impera*, and also generally excluded Indians from offices of trust and posts of responsibility. But there was something worse. The state of disorder then existing in Bengal was such that it could not have been worse if Lord Minto and his predecessors had deliberately devised means to prevent the people from uniting, on the assumption that in the miseries of England, when Sir Gilbert himself made his first important effort in that formidable assembly, and moved the impeachment of Sir Elijah Impey in a speech which elicited the warm admiration of its most illustrious members.

"In the following year he became one of the managers in the trial of Warren Hastings. 'His earnest desire,' he said in his opening speech on that occasion, 'to befriend the natives of India had decided him to undertake a business in many respects most uncongenial to his nature.' But another determining cause was the urgency with which Burke besought him to throw off his modesty, 'his only fault,' and the warmth of encouragement which hailed his opening effort. A note written in December 1787 and sent to Sir Gilbert with a book intended to be of use to him while engaged in the preparation of his charge against Sir Elijah Impey, ends thus :

'God bless you and forward your good undertaking. Stick to it. You have years before you, and if I were of your age, and had your talents and your manners, I should not despair of seeing India a happy country in a few years.

Yours Ever,  
E. BURKE.' "

To understand his Indian policy, it is necessary to know something of his antecedents before his assumption of the office of Governor-General of India. Happily, the details of his pre-Indian career are supplied by the three volumes of his *Life and Letters* from 1752 to 1806 by his great-niece, the Countess of Minto, published in 1874.

Although Lord Minto was a great friend of Burke, that friendship came to an end on the outbreak of the French Revolution. Henceforth he paid homage to Pitt, into whose confidence he wormed himself. He had been offered the Governorship of Madras, but declined it. But Pitt rewarded his adhesion to him by appointing him Viceroy of Corsica, a post which he held till 1796. Afterwards he was appointed minister at Vienna and held the post until the end of 1801.

Pitt was no Little Englander. He was desirous of founding a British Empire in India to compensate for the loss of America. As a confidential friend and protege of Pitt, in all human probability, he was thoroughly acquainted with Pitt's views and so during his administration he tried to give effect to those views. This explains his vigorous foreign policy while ruling India.

of the natives of India lay the strength of their European rulers and that it was therefore necessary to create distractions, disorder and confusion among them. There is, of course, no proof to show that dacoits were deliberately let loose among them or that dacoities were encouraged. But there are also no records to show that any effective steps were taken to prevent dacoities. Lord Dufferin, in his famous speech at St. Andrews Dinner, Calcutta, on the 30th of November, 1888, said :

"Indeed, it was only the other day that I was reading a life of Lord Minto, who mentions incidentally that in his time whole districts within twenty miles of Calcutta were at the mercy of dacoits, and this after the English had been more than fifty years in the occupation of Bengal."

But Dufferin did not offer any explanation for the existence of dacoits and the perpetration of dacoities in Bengal. It should be remembered that the natives of England had been ruling in Bengal ever since their gaining the battle of Plassey in 1757. They had established their supremacy there for above half a century, and yet it is a significant fact that dacoits thrived and flourished there when Lord Minto was the Governor-General.\*

Regarding the dacoits and their offences, James Mill writes :

"This class of offences did not diminish under the English Government and its legislative provisions. It increased, to a degree highly disgraceful to the legislation of a civilized people. *It increased under the English Government, not only to a degree of which there seems to have been no example under the native Governments of India, but to a degree surpassing what was ever witnessed in any country in which law and government could with any degree of propriety be said to exist.*"†

From the sentences we have put in italics, it might be possible for a historian to suggest that the British Government of India of that period had a hand in encouraging dacoits for the purposes already mentioned above. But in the absence of positive proof, we would not go so far. We would only say that effective steps were not taken to put down or even to discourage dacoities.

Sir Henry Strachey, one of the British judges in India in the beginning of the nineteenth century, also wrote :

"*The crime of dacoity has, I believe, increased greatly, since the British administration of justice.*"

In 1808, the judge of circuit in the Rajeshahye division also wrote :

"That dacoity is very prevalent in Rajeshahye has been often stated. But if its vast extent were known, if the scenes of horror, the murders, the burnings, the excessive cruelties, which are continually perpetrated here, were properly represented to Government, I am confident that some

\* To be fair to Lord Minto, it is necessary to say that the dacoits were not brought into existence by him, but the dacoits and the dacoities were the results of the so-called judicial reforms of the Marquess Cornwallis. There can be no doubt that the Marquess Cornwallis introduced these so-called reforms with the object of creating distractions in India. Lord Minto took advantage of the state of affairs then prevailing in the territories under his administration, and it does not appear that he ever took such effective steps to either bring the dacoits to book or to prevent the dacoities from taking place as were undertaken by his successor, the Marquess of Hastings, to ostensibly crush the Pindaris.

† V. 387.

measures would be adopted, to remedy the evil. *Yet the situation of the people is not sufficiently attended to. It cannot be denied, that in point of fact, there is no protection for persons or property.*"

Mr. Dowdeswell, the Secretary to Government, reported in 1809, that :

*"To the people of India there is no protection, either of persons or of property."*

Regarding the operations of the dacoits, Mill truly observed :

"Such is the military strength of the British Government in Bengal, that it could exterminate all the inhabitants with the utmost ease ; such at the same time is its *civil* weakness, that it is unable to save the community from running into that extreme disorder where the villain is more powerful to intimidate than the Government to protect." V. p : 410.

Would it be very unfair to infer from the above extracts that it was not the policy of the Government of those days to protect the people against the dacoits, for the prosperity and welfare, and consequent strength of the people meant danger to the alien, unsympathetic and selfish rulers of the land during that period ? This was the state of affairs in India after over half-a-century's administration of the country by the servants of the East India Company.\*

\* It is necessary to give Lord Minto's explanation of the existence of dacoits and the perpetration of dacoities. In a letter to Lady Minto, extracts from which are given in "Lord Minto in India" (page 185), Lord Minto wrote :—

"They (the dacoits) have of late come within thirty miles of Barrackpur. The crime of gang robbery has at all times, though in different degrees, obtained a footing in Bengal. The prevalence of the offence, occasioned by its success and impunity, has been much greater in this civilised and flourishing part of India, than in the wilder territories adjoining, which have not enjoyed so long the advantages of a regular and legal government ; and it appears at first sight mortifying to the English administration of these provinces, that our oldest possessions should be the worst protected against the evils of lawless violence.

"It has been said that the prosperity and undisturbed tranquillity of these lower provinces, which have never seen war within their limits during the present generation of their inhabitants, that is to say, for half a century, have afforded two inducements to the desperate associations which have so constantly harassed them under the name of dacoits. First, the riches of the country have presented the temptation of good plunder. Second, the long security which the country has enjoyed from foreign enemies, and the consequent loss of martial habits and character, have made the people of Bengal so timid and enervated, that no resistance is to be apprehended in the act, nor punishments afterwards. There have, however, certainly been other more specific causes for the extraordinary prevalence of the crime at particular quarters. Among these has been the nature of our judicial and police establishments. The judge and magistrate is an English gentleman, but all his subordinate officers and instruments are necessarily *native*. The probity and good intention of the English magistrate may in general be relied upon, but his vigilance, personal activity, intelligence, or talents, are not equal in all cases to his integrity. The consequence often is, that the practical and efficient part of the police is cast upon the black subaltern officers, amongst whom, it is hardly too much to say, although it sounds like an uncharitable partiality to my own fair complexion, that there is scarcely an exception to universal venality and corruption."

There is a proverb current in India that whosoever goes to Lanka (Ceylon) turns a cannibal. So it was no wonder that Lord Minto, who, as Sir Gilbert Elliot, was a friend of Burke, had moved the impeachment of Sir Elijah Impey and been one of the managers of the trial of Warren Hastings, should, after breathing the atmosphere of the Anglo-Indian society of India, have nourished uncharitable

A passing allusion must be made here to the tone adopted by all British writers on Indian history while speaking of the benefits conferred by their rule on the people of India. These writers are never tired of describing, by mainly indenting on their imagination, the so-called anarchy alleged to have prevailed in India on the break-up of the Mughal Empire. But so far they have not adduced any evidence to prove that anarchy existed in India previous to the assumption of the Government of Bengal by the British. During the last days of the Mughal Empire, while that empire was *in extremis*, military adventurers and also the servants of the Mughal Emperors tried to dismember the empire and succeeded in setting up independent kingdoms in several provinces of India. It was in this manner that Asaf Jah at Hyderabad and Saadat Khan in Oudh established their independent principalities. But there was no anarchy or internal disorder anywhere. There was no doubt some bloodshed, for no independent principality could have been brought into existence without waging wars and fighting battles. But it can be proved from historical accounts that there were more wars and battles in Europe during the 18th, and the beginning of the 19th century—in fact till the defeat and capture of Napoleon at Waterloo—than in India at the time when the Mughal Empire was tottering to pieces, or independent principalities and states were being carved out by the disloyal servants of the Mughal Emperors or by the Marathas or Rajputs. But the rulers of all these newly established states made it a principal object of their administration to be acquainted with the wants and desires of their subjects and to afford protection to their persons and properties. It cannot be said that anarchy or internal disorder existed in any form or shape in these newly raised independent states. But this cannot be said of the British rulers

feelings towards the people of India, and libelled and abused them to his heart's content. It is natural for Anglo-Indians to credit their fat-salaried countrymen with whatever good traits they discover in the administration of India, and impute the faults to the ill-paid native Indian officers or the natives of the country whenever anything goes wrong in the government of this country. Yes, Indians are made scapegoats for all crimes of omission and commission in Indian affairs! The British officers—those who constituted the class whom Lord Minto's deceased friend Burke described as 'birds of prey and passage in India,' who came out to India to shake the pagoda tree and grow rich and on their return to their native country to play 'Nabobs,' were all immaculate beings and therefore "the probity and good intentions of the English magistrate may in general be relied upon." Lord Minto was a believer in the myth that the co-religionists and compatriots of Clive and Warren Hastings were, like Caesar's wife, above all suspicion.

In some of the extracts made above, it is admitted that in the territories ruled by Native princes there was not such anarchy as in the adjoining British territory. Yet these Native territories had subordinate officers derived from the same class of Indians as that from which the corresponding class of the Indian servants of the East India Company were drawn. Had the Company then the misfortune of attracting to its service a very much larger proportion of rascals than were drawn to the service of the Native princes? In Lord Minto's opinion, British territory was richer than the adjoining native territory, and that was one cause of the dacoities in the British territory. But where are the proofs of this superior wealth?

That British subjects were emasculated is a damaging admission. Lord Minto's words, 'loss of martial habits and character,' with reference to the people of Bengal, is an admission that they had "martial habits and character" before the establishment of British rule in Bengal.

of that age and the territories under their administration. It seems that they never cared for the welfare or prosperity of their subjects, whose persons and properties they never took any step to protect.

It is also a singular fact that distractions and disorders commenced to appear in the different states of India not very long after the British established themselves as a political power in Bengal. It may hence be presumed that the Europeans sent emissaries to the states and principalities of Indian India to create distraction and confusion and disorder in them in order that they might be able to extend their power. It was the Europeans who helped the Nawab Vazir of Oudh to murder in cold blood the brave inhabitants of Rohilkhand.

So then, though it may not have been a matter of political expediency during the administration of Lord Minto not to give peace or afford security to the persons and properties of the inhabitants of the territories then under the rule of the East India Company, such peace and security were not enjoyed by them.

But the rising in arms of Indians of their own territories against their tyrannical rule was not the only danger which the British had to apprehend. The Marathas had been defeated but not altogether crushed. It was quite possible for them to combine again and take revenge on their British persecutors and aggressors. The persecutions to which Holkar had been subjected for so many years, the disappointments which he had met with, told on his health and he went out of his mind and became insane in 1808. Holkar was an ambitious prince and his becoming insane was very fortunate for the British at this critical period of their existence in India. So Lord Minto had no fear from Holkar. The character of Jaswant Rao Holkar has been thus described by Grant Duff :

"The chief feature of Jeswant Rao Holkar's character was that hardy spirit of energy and enterprise which, though, like that of his countrymen, boundless in success, was also apt to be discouraged by trying reverses. He was likewise better educated than Marathas in general, and could write both the Persian language and his own : his manner was frank, and could be courteous... In person his stature was low, but he was of a very active strong make, though his complexion was dark and he had lost an eye by the accidental bursting of a match lock, the expression of his countenance was not disagreeable, and bespoke something of droll humor, as well as of manly boldness."

The derangement of the intellect of such a prince was not a small gain to the British, who were further fortunate when it was settled that the government of Holkar's dominions should be administered by a regency controlled by Amir Khan, but under the nominal authority of Tulsibai, the favourite mistress of Jaswant Rao. On the death of Jaswant Rao, she adopted Mulhar Rao Holkar, a boy of four years of age, and in his name, continued to govern. Amir Khan was a Pathan soldier of fortune, and a leader of those men who were known in Indian history as Pindaris. The position which Amir Khan came to occupy in the government of Holkar's dominion was an event highly favourable to the cause of the British. Grant Duff writes :

"Ameer Khan was soon recalled to Rajputana in the prosecution of his own views, which were

solely bent upon the extension of predatory power for the interest of himself and his ferocious band of Pathans.....When it suited his views of plunder Ameer Khan sometimes advanced claims in Holkar's name but *those claims were not pressed where the consequence might involve the state of Holkar with the British Government.*"\*

The words put in italics in the above extract clearly show how anxious Amir Khan was to be in the good graces of the British Government of India. He further served as its cat's-paw by not bringing about order and good government in the state of which he was the virtual dictator. Grant Duff writes :

"The Government, if such it may be designated, of Holkar was alternately swayed by two factions, the Marathas and the Pathans, who were constantly intriguing against each other, and nothing could exceed the state of anarchy which prevailed 'throughout the country'."

This was exactly what suited the purpose of the British rulers. For the same historian writes :

"It was expected that their (the Maratha Chiefs') domestic wars, the plunder of their neighbours, and the fear of losing what they possessed, would deter them from hostile proceedings against the British Government."

So then it would not require much exercise of one's intelligence to infer that all the distractions and anarchy in the Holkar's Government, may have been created through the instrumentality of Amir Khan and served the selfish ends of the British. From the Government of Holkar there was no danger to the Company; nay, on the contrary, from the fact that Amir Khan was the virtual dictator of that state, they expected help and assistance from him to keep their position secure in India.

But from the other Maratha princes, especially Sindhia, there was the danger of invasion of their territories. The frontiers of British India were at this time contiguous to those of the Maratha princes, *viz.*, the Raja of Berar and the Maharaja Sindhia. Both these princes had been defeated by the British Government and made to part with a large portion of their dominions. It was not impossible that these princes would take revenge on the Britishers, since vengeance sleeps long but never dies. It was absolutely necessary, therefore, that steps should be taken to prevent Sindhia, known to have been an ambitious prince, as well as the Raja of Berar, from committing any mischief in British India. The finances of the Company were not such as to have allowed them to maintain a large army to guard their frontiers against the inroads of any of the Maratha princes. It seems to us that the British effected their own safety by creating distractions and disorders in the states of the Maratha Princes, not only by sending their own emissaries into those states, but keeping in their pay, as well as encouraging the Pindaris. We have arrived at this opinion by taking into consideration the facts and circumstances described below.

The Marquess Wellesley never concealed the fact that he desired to create distractions in the dominions of Dowlat Rao Sindhia when he was going to war with Tipu and trying to impose his scheme of subsidiary alliance on the neck of the Peshwa. At that time Dowlat Rao Sindhia was in the Deccan and it was considered necessary by the Governor-General that that Prince should return to Hindustan. To effect this,

\* P. 607.

he did not scruple to instruct his subordinates to devise means and send emissaries to that prince's dominion to stir up distractions. Again, when he wanted to go to war with the Maratha confederates, he instructed Lake, then in the Upper Provinces, to send emissaries to Sindhia's territories for the sole purpose of creating disorder. It is evident from the Marquess Wellesley's published despatches that, that Governor-General indulged in conspiracies and intrigues against Dowlat Rao Sindhia. It is therefore not unreasonable to presume that at this critical period of their history in India, the British rulers should have also adopted the very same means which the Marquess Wellesley had done with such marked success not very long ago. In this connection, Barlow's policy—policy, which declaredly looks to the disputes and wars of its neighbours, as one of the chief sources of its (British Government's) security"—should not be lost sight of.

Moreover, an embassy had been despatched to Persia under Sir John Malcolm with the avowed object of instigating the Muhammadan sovereign of that country to invade the territory of a friendly, and besides a Muhammadan prince, that is, of Afghanistan, to prevent the latter from ever giving trouble to the Europeans in India. We shall have occasion to refer to this Persian embassy later on. What we want here to emphasize is this, that while steps had been taken to prevent an independent power several thousands of miles away from the frontiers of British India from giving any trouble to the British Government, was it probable that precautionary measures should have been neglected against the inroads of the Maratha princes, especially when we remember the fact that they had been wronged and injured and were therefore expected to take revenge on the Government of India? The frontiers of British India and of the territories under the administration of the Maratha princes were contiguous and therefore it was much easier for the latter to always harass and give endless trouble to the British than for the Afghan sovereign to cross rocky passes and march through deserts before he could reach the British territories in India. The very existence of distractions and disorders in the dominions of the Maratha princes should lead us to suspect that these were mostly the work of the emissaries of the British Government.

It was not only by means of emissaries that the Europeans created all these distractions, but it is also most probable that the services of the Pindaris were also utilised for bringing about this miserable state of affairs in the Maratha states. It is not necessary here to devote much space to tracing the origin of the Pindaries. Regarding them Professor H. H. Wilson writes

"The Pindaries, as a body of irregular horse, serving without pay, and receiving in lieu of it, license to plunder, appear to have originated in the South of India, constituting an element in the composition of the armies of the last Muhammadan dynasties of the Deccan. After their downfall, the services of the Pindaries were transferred to the Marathas, with whom they served against Aurangzeb, and at a still later date, after that event, their leaders settled chiefly in Malwa, and attaching themselves respectively to Sindhia and Holkar, became distinguished as Sindhia Shahi, and Holkar Shahi Pindaries, receiving grants of land chiefly in the vicinity of the Nerbudda, for the maintenance of themselves and their followers in time of peace, on the condition of gratuitous co-operation in time of war."

The Pindaris thus appear to have been a sort of unpaid militia whose services were required only in time of war ; at other times they used to lead the lives of peaceful cultivators. Lest these Pindaris should give trouble to the Europeans, it would seem that they were subsidised by them not only to keep them out of their territories, but also to create distractions in the dominions of the Maratha princes. That at one time at least the Pindaris were subsidised by the Company appears very clearly from the despatches of the Duke of Wellington. Dating his letter from camp, twelve miles north of the Gutpurba, 29th March, 1803, the Duke of Wellington (at that time Major General Wellesley) wrote to General Stuart :

"I enclose the translation of a paper, which, with the concurrence and advice of Major Malcolm, I have given to Appa Saheb's Vakeel.

"He has had three thousand Pindaries in his service, to whom he gave no pay and who subsisted by plundering the Raja of Kolapoor. In order that all these chiefs may come forward in the service of the Peishwa at the present crisis, I have prevailed upon them to cease hostilities and, of course, Appa Saheb's Pindaries can no longer subsist upon the plunder they might require in the territory of the Raja of Kolapoor . . . *If he (the Peishwa) should not approve of retaining them, they may either be discharged, or may be employed in the plunder of the enemy without pay, according to circumstances ; and at all events, supposing that his Highness should refuse to pay their expenses. . . . the charge to the Company will be trifling in comparison with the benefit which this detachment must derive from keeping this body of Pindaries out of Holkar's services, and from cutting off our communications with the army.*"

From the words put in italics in the above extracts, the motive which prompted the future Iron Duke to subsidize the Pindaris is quite evident. The reasons which he urged for bribing the Pindaris applied with equal force to the critical situation in which the Government of India found itself during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Minto. It is not therefore improbable that the same means should have also been adopted in Minto's time which General Wellesley had advocated years previously to have the Pindaris "employed in the plunder of the enemy without pay". That these Pindaris were in the pay of the Company seems highly probable from an incidental circumstance mentioned in a foot-note by Grant Duff in his history of the Marathas. That author writes :

"For a long time they (*Pindaris*) respected the persons of the British subjects, to which the author (Captain Grant Duff) can bear testimony, having accidentally passed through a body of (*Pindaris*) in the middle of a night when they had committed excesses : and to him, though unarmed and unattended. they offered neither molestation nor insult."

The only explanation for the Pindaris refraining from molesting or insulting British subjects would lie in the hypothesis that the Pindaris were in the pay of the Company and therefore were bound not to molest or insult them. But those who sow the wind, reap the whirl-wind. The Pindaris after all commenced raids in the provinces of British India. Grant Duff writes :

"For some time, until the districts in Malwa, Marwar, Mewar, and the whole of Rajputana were exhausted, and the *Pindaris* were excited to venture on more fertile fields, their ravages were chiefly

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\* Duke of Wellington's Despatches; Vol. I., pp. 120-111. See also *Origin of the Pindaris* (Allahabad reprint).



confined to those countries and Berar, .....But even had no other causes arisen to excite the *Pindaris* to extend their depredations, it was impossible, in the state in which India was left by the half measures and *selfish policy* adopted by the British Government, that any part of it could long remain exempt from predatory inroad. The Rajput states were overrun by Amir Khan, Sindhia, Holkar and the *Pindaris*, and the territories of Sindhia and Holkar, intermixed as they were in Malwa, at the hands of a powerful and lawless soldiery, soon became like Rajputana, common prey."<sup>o</sup>

The "*selfish policy*," as shown in the words of Barlow quoted on a previous page, was the policy adopted by the British to 'maintain their "security" in India. It has also been hinted at before, that this "selfish policy" must have dictated the British to pay and instigate the *Pindaris* to create distractions in the states of the non-Christian princes of India. Of course, all the *Pindaris* and their leaders were not bribed and subsidized. The policy was to play off one against the other, and so acting on this policy, they would have only favoured a few in order to excite the jealousies of the others and succeed in inducing them to cut each other's throats. It seems almost certain that Amir Khan was one of those whom the British subsidized, since he was an intelligent and powerful freebooter and had also a large following. To this circumstance, perhaps, is to be attributed the fact of his never committing raids in the adjacent territories of British India.

The provinces then under the administration of the Company in India, were after all, not free from the ravages of the *Pindaris*. It was towards the close of Lord Minto's rule, that is, about the year 1812, that the *Pindaris* first made their appearance in British India. The real reasons for their raids in the British territories cannot be very definitely and with certainty stated. It may be, as Grant Duff writes, that the *Pindaris*, after having exhausted the districts of the native states, "were encouraged and excited to venture on more fertile fields." But we suspect that it was the withdrawal of the subsidy of certain *Pindari* leaders which might have prompted them to commit ravages in the British territories. It is also not impossible that the *Pindaris* were secretly encouraged by 'the independent native princes to make raids on the British provinces, as a retaliatory measure against what they had suffered at the hands of the Christian Government of India.

The fact being remembered that the *Pindaris* were a sort of irregular militia, who, in time of peace, cultivated their fields or followed their own professions, and that their services were only requisitioned as camp followers in time of war to plunder and annoy the enemy's country and army, the question naturally arises why after the termination of the Second Maratha War, the *Pindaris*, instead of leading their peaceful avocations, were always in a state of perpetual warfare and created distractions, disorder, confusion and anarchy in the dominions of the principal native princes, with whom not very long ago the Europeans had been at war. Does not this very fact suggest the answer that the *Pindaris* were encouraged and bribed by the Europeans to create distractions in the native states, in order that the Europeans might enjoy security in the territories then under their administration ?

Amir Khan, as has been already said before, was in the pay of the Europeans. He

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<sup>o</sup> P. 611.

never crossed swords with or gave trouble to, the latter.\* Nevertheless, they at one time were desirous to crush him, when he invaded the dominion of the Raja of Berar. It was not out of any love for the Raja that the Europeans came to his rescue, but it was political expediency which prompted them to adopt the course which they did. Amir Khan's reasons for invading the Raja of Berar's territory are thus set forth by H. H. Wilson in his edition of Mill's History of India :

"Left without control by the insanity of Holkar, keeping together a numerous body of troops, for the payment of which he possessed no means of his own, Amir Khan, after exhausting the resources of the Rajput princes, was compelled to look abroad for plunder, and enlarge the field of his depredations. The Raja of Berar was selected as the victim of his necessities.

"In the commencement of his political career, Jeswant Rao Holkar had been detained for some time as a prisoner at Nagpur, and according to his own assertion, was pillaged by the Raja of jewels of very great value. Ameer Khan now demanded, in the name of Holkar, the restitution of the jewels or their price, and, as the demand was not complied with, he moved, in January 1809, to the frontiers of Berar with all his force. No serious opposition was offered to Ameer Khan's advance."

"Although not bound by the terms of the existing treaty to give military aid to the Raja of Nagpur against his enemies, yet the aggression of Amir Khan was considered by the Bengal Government to mean its vigorous interposition. There were grounds for suspecting that his movements were not unconnected with the discontent of the Subahdar of Hyderabad : and although the assertions of his envoys at Nagpur that their masters had been induced to invade the country by the invitation of the Nizam, who had offered to defray the cost of a still more formidable armament, might not be deserving of implicit credit, yet the known sympathies of the parties rendered such a league between them far from improbable. The interests of the British power were, therefore, implicated with those of the Raja of Berar."†

The Nizam, it should be remembered, was merely a puppet in the hands of the Company. That he should have ventured to have taken such a step as that attributed to him in the above passage, without the knowledge or connivance of the British Resident at his court, seems very highly improbable. It appears to us that the Nizam had been inspired by the Europeans at his court to intrigue with, and invite Amir Khan to invade the Raja of Berar's territory, in order first to ruin that Pathan soldier of fortune and secondly to inveigle the Raja of Berar in the scheme of subsidiary alliance. Amir Khan, although in the pay of the British, was an able and intelligent man. He was a tall poppy, and as such, although he had proved of great service to the Europeans, the latter would have been only too delighted to see his downfall and death.

On the other hand, the Raja of Berar, although not a strong prince, was a Maratha and smarting under the insults and injuries he had been subjected to by the British, and thus it was not an impossible or improbable thing for the Raja to conspire against them, since vengeance sleeps long, but never dies. At the time when the war was going to be declared against Holkar, it is alleged that the Raja of Berar was intriguing with Holkar against the British. At that time the Government of India

\* This, of course, does not refer to the period when Jaswant Rao Holkar was at war with the British. Even then, Ameer Khan seems to have been in secret understanding with them.

† Vol. VII. p : 216

pressed the Raja to enter into the scheme of subsidiary alliance with them. In the despatch of the Governor-General in Council to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, dated Fort William, March 24th, 1805, it is stated after mentioning the unwillingness of the Raja to enter into the subsidiary alliance :

*"It appeared to be more advisable to leave the Raja to the operation of future events on his mind, and to trust exclusively to the object of obtaining the consent of the Raja to the alliance ; with this view, the Resident was directed to refrain from any further agitation of the question. . . .*

Reading the above, it is evident that the Europeans must have earnestly prayed for some imminent danger befalling the Raja of Berar which would oblige him to seek their protection. Regarding the anxiety of the Europeans for obtaining the accession of the Raja of Berar to the alliance, it will not be straining one's imagination too much to predict that they must have taken means to bring about such a state of affairs as would threaten his very existence. It was not impossible then for them to have indirectly induced Amir Khan through their puppet, the Nizam, to have attacked the Raja of Berar and then to show their disinterestedness to have come to the rescue of the latter so as to make him believe that they were his true friends. It was no doubt double-dealing, or, to quote the proverb, 'hunting with the hound and running with the hare.' But without double-dealing, without acting on the maxims and suggestions of Machiavelli, it was impossible for the Europeans to obtain power and establish their supremacy in India.

Amir Khan protested against the Company rendering aid to the Raja of Berar. H. H. Wilson writes that Amir Khan,

*"appealed with unanswerable justice, although with no avail, to the stipulation of the existing treaty with Holkar on whose behalf he pretended to act, which engaged that the British Government would not in any manner whatever interfere in his affairs, and . . . . he argued that the conduct of the Government was a manifest infraction of the treaty, and a breach of the solemn promises made to Jeswant Rao, that it would not meddle with his claims upon the Raja of Berar. These representations were no longer likely to be of any weight."*

The British assembled an army to punish Amir Khan. That Pathan soldier of fortune had no heart or perhaps it did not suit his policy, as he had been in secret understanding with them, to fight. On the approach of the army led by the British officers Amir Khan precipitately retreated from the Raja of Berar's territory. The British also did not pursue him : for,

*"Although for a season," writes Wilson,† "it was in contemplation to continue military operations until the complete destruction of Amir Khan's power should have been effected, yet the probability that the prosecution of this policy might lead to a protracted and expensive series of hostilities induced the Governor-General to depart from his original design, and content himself with the accomplishment of the main object of the armament. Their troops were therefore recalled to their several stations in the Company's territories and of those of their allies.‡*

\* VII. 218

† VII. 220.

‡ Lord Minto felt "that an enterprising and ambitious Musalman chief, at the head of a numerous army, irresistible by any power except that of the Company, should not be permitted

There were expeditions against some of the petty chiefs of Bundelkhand and also a little war in Travancore.

Thus, although Minto considered the Indian Empire safe either from the rebellion of the inhabitants of the territories then under the administration of his countrymen or from the aggression of the Maratha princes, there was still apprehension of invasion of India by some foreign power or powers. For the first time in the history of British India, the North-western Frontier assumed an importance which it has ever since maintained in its administration.

Minto's administration is noted for its foreign policy and hence more than a passing allusion should be made to it. But none of the measures of his foreign policy originated with him. He merely carried out and gave effect to what had already been initiated by the Marquess Wellesley.

The king of Afghanistan had, during the administration of Minto, a grand opportunity of invading India. But Marquess Wellesley had taken steps which had the effect of paralysing the energies and attempts on the part of that Afghan sovereign to invade India with any certainty of success. It was no longer now Zaman Shah who ruled the turbulent Afghans : it is certain that had that prince been ruling in Afghanistan at that time he would have made some attempts to take advantage of the critical position of the British in India and invaded it.

The measures which the Marquess Wellesley had initiated in preventing the Afghan sovereign from ever invading India were also given full effect to by Lord Minto. It was Wellesley who sent an embassy to Persia and opened intrigues with the inhabitants of Sindh and the Panjab which were at that time, nominally at least, subject to the King of Kabul. Not very long after his arrival in India, Wellesley directed his attention to checking the movements towards India of the Afghan sovereign. With this object in view he wrote to Jonathan Duncan, at that time Governor of Bombay, a letter dated Fort William, 8th October, 1798, in which he said :

"I concur with you in thinking that the services of the native agent whom you have appointed to reside at Bushire may be usefully employed for the purpose mentioned in that letter ; and as the probability of the invasion of Hindustan by Zeman Shah seems to increase, I am of opinion that Mehdi Ali Khan cannot too soon commence his operations at the court of Baba Khan, .....*It would certainly be a very desirable object to excite such an alarm in that quarter as may either induce the Shah to relinquish his projected expedition, or may recall him should he have actually embarked on it.*"

The words put in italics show how anxious the Governor-General was to prevent Zaman Shah from invading India. He was not content with what the Governor of Bombay had done by sending an agent to Bushire. He sent an embassy to Persia under Malcolm towards the end of the year 1799. In his letter of instructions, dated

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to establish his authority, on the ruins of the Raja's dominions, over territories contiguous to those of the Nizam, with whom community of religion, combined with local power and resource, might lead to the formation of projects probably not uncongenial to the mind of the Nizam himself and certainly consistent with the views and hopes of a powerful party in his court for the subversion of the British alliance." (Minto in India. p. 192).

Fort William, 10th October, 1799, Colonel Kirkpatrick, Military Secretary to Wellesley, wrote to Malcolm :

"At Bombay you will be furnished by the Governor-in-Council with copies of all the correspondence which has passed between him and Mehdi Ali Khan, a native agent employed for some time past by Mr. Duncan, under the instructions of the Governor-General, in opening and conducting a negotiation at the court of Persia with a view to preventing Zemaun Shah from executing his frequently renewed projects against Hindustan."

\* \* \* \* \*

You will apprise the court of Persia of your deputation as soon as possible after your arrival, either at Bussorah or at Bagdad, intimating in general terms, that the object of it is to revive the good understanding and friendship which anciently subsisted between the Persian and the British Governments. It is not desirable that you should be more particular with any person who may be sent to meet you, or to ascertain the design of your mission, but if much pressed on the subject you may signify, that among other things, you have been instructed to endeavour to extend and improve the commercial intercourse between Persia and the British positions in India.

Of course, this was a pure and simple lie, for such was not the real object of the mission. The real object is disclosed in the letter; for, continued Colonel Kirkpatrick:

"The primary purpose of your mission is to prevent Zemaun Shah from invading Hindustan, or should he actually invade it, to oblige him, by alarming him for the safety of his own dominions, to relinquish the expedition. The next object of his lordship is to engage the court of Persia to act vigorously and heartily against the French in the event of their attempting at any time to penetrate to India by any route in which it may be practicable for the king of Persia to oppose their progress.

Such was the mission of Malcolm to Persia. He was authorized to conclude a treaty with the king of Persia.

"To engage to prevent Zemaun Shah, by such means as shall be concerted between his Majesty," and Captain Malcolm, "from invading part of Hindustan, and in the event of his crossing the Attock, or of the actual invasion of Hindustan by that prince, the king of Persia to pledge himself to the adoption of such measures as shall be necessary for the purpose of compelling Zemaun Shah to return immediately to the defence of his own dominions."

To play the part of Judas, to betray a prince of his creed and faith, the king of Persia was tempted with a huge bribe.

"The Company (so ran the article of the treaty) to engage to pay to the King of Persia for this service, either an annual fixed subsidy of three lacs of rupees during the period that this treaty shall continue in force, or a proportion, not exceeding one-third, of such extraordinary expense as his Majesty shall at any time actually and *bona fide* incur for the specific purposes stated in the foregoing article."

It was necessary to create distractions in the dominions of the Afghan sovereign. With this object in view, Malcolm was written to :

"In considering the different means by which Zemaun Khan may be kept in check during the period required, you will naturally pay due attention to those which may be derived from the exiled brothers of that prince, now resident in Persia under the protection of Baba Khan. If occasion should offer, you will cultivate a good understanding with those princes, but you are not to contract any positive engagements with them without the specific authority of the Governor-General."

Another instruction to Malcolm ran as follows :

"You will endeavour during your residence at the court of Baba Khan to obtain an accurate

account of the strength and resources of Zemaun Shah, and of his political relations with his different neighbours, and to establish some means of obtaining hereafter the most correct and speedy information on the subject of his future intentions and movements."

Thus it is clear that the secret of Malcolm's mission to Persia was to intrigue and conspire against Zaman Shah. It must be added that all these intrigues and conspiracies were successful, for these brought about within a short time the downfall of Zaman Shah. In 1801, that is, within less than two years after Malcolm's departure from India for Persia, Afghanistan was the scene of bloodshed and murders and of political revolutions. Zaman Shah, whose name used to inspire terror in the breasts of the English, was no longer the sovereign of the Afghans. He was deposed by his half-brother Mahmud, who put out his eyes and placed him in close confinement in the Bala Hissar at Kabul. He was released by his whole brother Shah Suja, who dethroned Mahmud.

These political revolutions in Afghanistan happening so soon after the embassy of Malcolm to Persia bear a significance which no one possessing the least insight into Occidental statecraft will fail to take proper notice of. It is not straining one's imagination too much to say that the British very dexterously manipulated the affairs of Afghanistan through Persia in a manner which turned out very beneficial to them.

Besides instigating the king of Persia to create distractions in Afghanistan, Malcolm's mission also had in view the engaging of the court of Persia to act in concert with the English against the French. In the letter of instructions to Malcolm from which extracts have been already given above, Colonel Kirkpatrick wrote :

"With respect to the second object of your mission or the engaging of the court of Persia to act eventually against the French, his Lordship deems it unnecessary to furnish you with any detailed instructions. The papers with which you will be furnished, and your own knowledge and reflection will suggest to you all the arguments proper to be used for the purpose of convincing the court of Persia of the deep interest it has in opposing the projects of that nation, and of inducing it to take an active and decisive part against them."

At the time of Wellesley, there was no likelihood of the French intriguing with Persia and of their invading India. But with that Frankophobia which was so characteristic of the Irish Governor-General, he negotiated with the king of Persia to oppose the projects of the French which only existed in his imagination. But in the time of Minto, the possibility not so much of French as of Russian designs on India, was fully believed in by the politicians and statesmen of England. From this period, commences that era of Russophobia which has proved a curse to the British rule in India. This has stood in the way of Indian prosperity and good government of the country.

At the time of Minto in India, the British were afraid of the invasion of India by the combined forces of Russia and France through Persia. Previous to Minto's arrival in India, Russia was the friend and ally of England. But, writes Kaye :\*

"Russia had ceased to be our friend and ally. She had been fighting for dear life against the growing power of Napoleon, and we had hoped that she would aid us in our efforts to checkmate

\* *Lives of Indian Officers*, Vol. I. p. 169.

France in the East. But the peace of Tilsit, as if by magic, changed all this. After the bloody flights of Eylau and Friedland the two armies had fraternised, and the two emperors had embraced each other on a raft floating on the surface of the river Niemen. Among the vast projects of conquest which they then formed was a conjoint campaign '*contre les possessions de la compagnie des Indes*'. The territories of the East India Company were to be divided between these two great continental potentates. It was believed that the attack would be made by land rather than by sea, and that Persia would become a basis of operations against the North-Western Province of India. The danger was not an imaginary one. It was the harvest time of great events, and the invasion of India by a mighty European force did not seem to rise above the ordinary level of the current history of the day."

The invasion of India by the combined forces of France and Russia never became an accomplished fact. When however it suited the political expediency of Napoleon, he did not scruple to forge the so-called will of Peter the Great and spread Russophobia among the inhabitants of Great Britain.

The invasion of India by France and Russia was seriously believed in by the ministers of England and so they contemplated despatching an embassy to Persia.\*

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\* Countess Minto, in her work on *Lord Minto in India*, (pp. 98—101) writes :

"At the beginning of 1806, Persia, being engaged in hostilities with Russia, sent an ambassador to Paris to desire the assistance of France. A cordial reception was given him, and it was announced that a splendid mission, having authority to make a treaty of alliance between France and Persia, would be despatched from Paris to Teheran.

"In order to counteract the effect of these proceedings a similar course was adopted by England. An envoy was appointed to Persia, and, with the object of lending greater dignity and importance to his credentials, it was suggested by the Court of Directors that, while remaining their own paid agent, he should be invested with the character of representative of the Crown. The proposal was acceded to by the ministry of Lord Grenville. There could be little question that Persia was only important to France as a weapon of offence against Great Britain.....Sir Harford Jones was appointed to the Persian Mission, to represent the Crown while receiving instructions from the Company. ...."

".....Sir Harford Jones was directed to proceed in the first instance to St. Petersburg to offer to the Czar the mediation of Great Britain between Russia and Persia.

"The peace and alliance between France and Russia had rendered the failure of this preliminary mission a certainty, . . . ."

"In the meanwhile the aspect of affairs was becoming daily graver, as the co-operation of France and Russia in the East grew more probable."

"In January 1808, rumours reached India of the march of a French army under General Menon towards Persia on the way to India while it became known that a great military embassy attended by four-and-twenty French officers and three hundred French soldiers had actually arrived there, giving it out that they were the advanced guard of an army. The first project is believed to be to take possession of a port on the coast of the Persian Gulf, by which they may communicate with the Mauritius, and receive supplies by sea, and from whence they may attempt an invasion of the Western coast of India, and unsettle the minds of the native princes by promises, menaces and intrigue.' "

No one knew better than Lord Minto himself that these rumours were quite baseless. In a secret letter dated Feb. 2, 1808, he wrote :—

"As long as France might be engaged in continental wars in Europe, the project of directing her arms towards this quarter must be considered impracticable, but if her armies have been liberated by a pacification with Russia and by the continued submission of the Powers of Europe, the advance

Minto on his arrival in India was thinking of sending an ambassador to Persia. It is foreign to our purpose to refer to the friction that arose between the authorities in England and India regarding the choice of the proper person as ambassador to Persia. Minto thought it proper to send an Indian officer as representing the East India Company at the head of the Embassy to Persia.\* The officer so selected was

of a considerable force of French troops into Persia under the acquiescence of the Turkish, Russian and Persian powers, cannot be deemed an undertaking beyond the scope of that energy and perseverance which distinguish the present ruler of France." (*Ibid.*, p. 100.)

\* But Lord Minto seemed to believe in the possibility of French invasion of India through Persia. In continuing the letter from which an extract has been given above, he wrote :

"If one body of troops should succeed in penetrating as far as the Persian dominions, others may be expected to follow, and it may then be no longer at the option of the Government of Persia to prevent the complete establishment of the French power and ascendancy in Persia.

"The ascendancy of France being once established in the territories of Persia in the manner described, it may justly be expected that, from that centre of local power, they may be enabled gradually to extend their influence by conciliation or by conquest towards the region of Hindustan, and ultimately open a passage for their troops into the dominion of the Company."

"Arduous as such an undertaking must necessarily be, we are not warranted in deeming it in the present situation of affairs to be altogether chimerical and impracticable under the guidance of a man whose energy and success appear almost commensurate with his ambition. We deem it our duty to act under a supposition of its practicability, and to adopt whatever measures are in our judgement calculated to counteract it even at the hazard of injury to some local and immediate interests."

Again in a private letter he wrote :

"What would have seemed impossible has become scarcely improbable, since we have seen one state after another in Europe, among them those we deemed most stable and secure, fall like a house of cards before the genius of one man."

Lord Minto was a victim of Frankophobia and Russophobia. He was desirous of fighting France and Russia in Persia. So in a letter to Sir George Barlow, he wrote :

"I am strongly of opinion that if this great conflict is to be maintained, we ought to meet it as early and as far beyond our own frontiers as possible. We ought to contest Persia itself with the enemy and to dispute every step of their progress. The force which we can oppose to them in that stage of the contest is indeed much smaller than they would find assembled against them in our own territories, but in Persia we should have much less to contend with also, and we should meet an enemy much less prepared than he will be if we wait at home till he is ready to face us."

"This system, however, depends on the disposition of Persia herself to neutrality—that is, to let the French and us fight it out fairly between us. For if Persia is determined to support the French with all her power, I acknowledge that we cannot possibly detach such a force from our Indian Army as that state of things would require. *At least we could not do so without finding some means to divide Persia and to have allies on our side as well as the French.*" (*Ibid.*, pp. 107-108)

The last sentence in the above extract has been put in italics to show the Machiavellian policy which the noble Lord was anxious to adopt in his dealings with Persia. He stood in need of a man who could play on the diplomatic stage of Persia to his satisfaction. In Malcolm he found such a man. To Right Hon. R. Dundas, President of the Board of Control, Lord Minto wrote :

"By Colonel Malcolm, if by any man living, we may hope to detach her from hostile alliance with our enemy, and, if that benefit is no longer attainable, we shall receive from Colonel Malcolm authentic information and judicious advice. If Sir H. Jones should have arrived in Persia, Colonel Malcolm will of course withhold his own credentials and diplomatic powers in Persia, . . ."

*Ibid.*, p. 108.



Malcolm who had once before been sent to Persia by Wellesley. Malcolm was a past master in the art of lying, duplicity and intrigues. He returned from Persia towards the end of the year 1810. In his journal he entered the manner in which, with "deceit, falsehood, and intrigue", his mission to Persia was crowned with success :

"What a happy man I am ! It is impossible to look back without congratulating myself on my good fortune at every stage of my late vexatious and unpromising mission. I have now turned my back, and I hope for ever, on deceit, falsehood and intrigue ; and I am bending my willing steps and still more willing heart towards rectitude, truth and sincerity."

Malcolm's mission was ostensibly undertaken to make the King of Persia an ally of England against the French and Russians.†

\* (*Ibid.*, p. 186)

† To Malcolm Lord Minto wrote a confidential letter of instructions. He wrote :

"Of these transactions our opposition to France in Persia is the anchor on which our hopes must rest, for if we permit that country to be the depot of her preparations against us and wait at home till the enemy thinks himself that he is equal to the undertaking, we shall give him a great, and, as it appears to me, a most manifest advantage. . . . ."

The letter ends with the confession that "Sir H. Jones is rather a *marplot* (I am writing confidentially) in our play."

Malcolm's instructions were :

"First to detach the court of Persia from the French alliance : and to prevail on that Court to refuse the passage of French troops through the territories subject to Persia, or the admission of French troops into the country. If that cannot be obtained, to admit English troops with a view of opposing the French Army in its progress to India, to prevent the cession of any maritime port and the establishment of French factories on the coast of Persia."

"Second, to obtain authentic intelligence on all points interesting to the Government. It is scarcely necessary to particularise those points, which will necessarily suggest themselves to the mind of Colonel Malcolm. The principal of them are the real nature and extent of the engagements entered into by France and Persia, and the real disposition of Persia respecting the execution of them. Colonel Malcolm's opinion and advice would also be required by the Government as to the policy to be adopted in either of two contingencies supposed—the active hostility of Persia, or her neutrality."

But Malcolm by his high-handed proceedings in Persia disappointed Lord Minto. In a letter dated July 30th, 1808, Minto wrote to Lieutenant-General Hewitt, the Commander-in-Chief, as follows :

"I am sorry to say in strict confidence that Malcolm has disappointed me exceedingly at the beginning of his mission. . . .

" . . . You will be, I daresay, as much surprised as we have been to learn that the first condition required by Malcolm was the immediate expulsion from Persia of the French embassy with every man of that nation . . . But I am compelled to say that my confidence is entirely shaken by the injudicious course he has pursued, and the disadvantageous ground he has taken. Persia is in the hands of France, and was only to be weaned from that connection by good and convincing reasons urged in a conciliatory form. . . ."

In a letter to Mr. Edmonstone, Lord Minto wrote :

"Malcolm's proceedings at Muscat has been affected with the original sin of his whole system."

In a Minute dated 21st July, 1808, Lord Minto, referring to Malcolm's peremptory demand for the expulsion of the French mission from Persia, wrote :

"The demand cannot be supported on any ground of justice. Persia, as an independent Government, has a right to receive accredited ministers from any other court, and to enter into any

The people of Afghanistan can never entertain love and affection for the natives of England, who have always heaped disasters, miseries and ruin on them. Ever since the days of the Marquess Wellesley, the solution of the problem of maintaining

negotiation she may think advisable. . . . Persia was and continued to be exposed to an invasion from Russia, which is to her a subject of great and reasonable alarm. She first applied to us for assistance. It was impossible for us, consistently with the relations in which we stood to Russia, to afford the aid she asked. She therefore gave us fair notice that, although she would have preferred our co-operation to every other, she was constrained to provide for her safety by looking elsewhere for the aid which she could not obtain from us."

"Upon this ground her connection with France has been formed. . . ."

So the mission to Persia was a failure and Malcolm was recalled to India. Countess Minto in her work on Lord Minto in India writes:

"The mission from which so much had been expected had failed. It is possible, even probable, that a more conciliatory course might have enabled him to remain in Persia until a change of circumstances produced a change of sentiments on the part of the Persian Government, when his personal popularity and his conspicuous talents might have restored the prestige of the British name, and enabled him to conduct his negotiations with better effect than Sir Harford Jones but the neglect with which the India Government had treated Persia during the years that had elapsed since Malcolm's first mission, had perhaps a greater share in producing the present disappointment than his somewhat ill-timed arrogance" (pp. 120-121).

After Malcolm returned to India, he had an interview with Lord Minto and was thus able to remove from the mind of the Governor-General much of the misunderstanding regarding the failure of his diplomatic mission to Persia. In a letter to General Hewitt, Commander-in-Chief, Lord Minto wrote:

"I confess I have not seen reason to recall the sentiments I entertained concerning the general policy adopted by him in Persia, but I note with satisfaction that what appears to have been the least prudent and judicious course has proved, as often happens in human affairs, the most useful and advantageous.

"Since success was impossible, it is satisfactory to have arrived at the knowledge of the fact as early as possible, and since moderation and forbearance could have made no difference in the result, it is well that his line of conduct has asserted the power of our country and made manifest our knowledge of the influence under which Persia had adopted so hostile a course."

Sir H. Jones remained in Persia, and he succeeded in negotiating a treaty with the Shah and prevailed on him to send an ambassador to England.

After the conclusion of this treaty, Minto, in a spirit of bravado and to discredit Sir H. Jones and show his own importance as Governor-General of India, sent Malcolm a second time to Persia.

Regarding this affair Countess Minto writes:

"To despise is to weaken. Reputation is power."—said an English writer well versed in the knowledge of courts and men. So thinking, Lord Minto asked Colonel Malcolm once more to undertake a mission to Persia. . . . Malcolm and Sir Harford Jones met at last in Persia. To Malcolm were given the honors of the situation by the King, who had a personal regard for him, and created for his special behoof a new order of knighthood, entitled that of the 'Lion and the Sun'."

By the treaty which Sir H. Jones concluded with the Shah, Persia was detached from the sphere of the East India Company's operations; referring to this, Countess Minto writes:

"One of the disadvantages which could not but accrue to the diplomacy of the Company's Government by the withdrawal of Persia from the sphere of its operations, was seen when it appeared that, by an article of the treaty negotiated at Teheran by Sir Harford Jones, it was stipulated that, in case of war between Persia and Afghanistan, 'His Majesty the King of Great Britain should not take any part therein, unless at the desire of both parties,' while, in ignorance of the existence of

the supremacy and security of the British people in India seemed to have consisted in keeping Afghanistan divided and making it the hot bed of intrigues and disturbances. At that time, nominally at least, subject to the ruler of Kabul were the provinces of Sindh and the Panjab. Wellesley was not content only with sending the embassy to Persia to stir up disturbances in Afghanistan, but also intrigued with the inhabitants of Sindh and the Panjab with the object of their shaking off the rule of the king of Kabul.

Minto sent a mission to Sindh, ostensibly to contract an alliance with the Amirs of that province against the French but in reality against the Afghan sovereign. H. H. Wilson writes :\*

"Alarmed by the menaced interference of Shah Suja (the Afghan king) on behalf of the expelled prince, Abd-un-nabi, the Amirs of Sindh had applied to Persia for succour, and a Persian army had been directed to march to their assistance. The death of Abd-un-nabi, and the embarrassments which Shah Suja experienced at home, removed all ground of fear from Afghanistan, and the Amirs became most apprehensive of peril from their allies. They thought it prudent, therefore, to oppose one powerful friend to another,—British India to Persia: they therefore began to conciliate the British Government and sent an agent to Bombay to propose the renewal of the 'commercial intercourse that had formerly existed. The proposal was favourably entertained, and Captain Seton was sent as envoy to Hyderabad. A treaty of offensive and defensive alliance was concluded by the envoy with the Amirs, but, as the stipulations pledged the British Government to a reciprocity that was deemed inexpedient, the ratification of the treaty was withheld, and Mr. Nicholas Hankey Smith, a Bombay Civil Servant, was deputed to explain the cause, and to contract a less comprehensive engagement. ....Mr. Smith reached Hyderabad on the 8th of August (1809), and on the 23rd of that month a treaty was signed, which engaged that there should be eternal friendship between the two Governments; that vakeels or agents should be mutually appointed; and that the French should not be permitted to form an establishment in Sindh."

But as there was no possibility of the French invasion of India ever taking place the real object of the mission to Sindh, as shown in the above extract, was to conclude an alliance with the Amirs against Afghanistan.†

any such agreement, Mr. Elphinstone had been authorised to form a defensive alliance with Afghanistan against an attack from Persia, as was stated in the treaty signed at Calcutta on June 17 of the same year 1809. Yet Persia and Cabul were both necessary members of the Confederacy with which the India Government had proposed to resist an invasion of India."

\* (VII. 156)

† In her work, *Lord Minto in India*, Countess Minto writes:—

"The State of Scinde had come within the scope of the defensive arrangements proposed by the British Government, but the indiscretion of their agent, Captain Seton, led to the annulling of the treaty concluded by him with the Ameer of Scinde.

"It was found that Persian agents were negotiating with the Government of Scinde at the same time as the Envoy of the India Government, that they had authority to act for both France and Persia, and that the bait held out to the Government of Scinde was military aid to throw off the yoke of the King of Kabul to whom they owed a nominal allegiance, and the possession of the Afghan fortress of Candahar. The chief ruler of Scinde informed Captain Seton distinctly that, despairing of the good will of the British Government, he had intended to close with the offer of the French and Persians, But preferred the British alliance on the same terms.' These terms, agreed to by Captain Seton, were not consistent with the endeavours

Minto also sent envoys to the Panjab and Afghanistan.

The condition of the Panjab had attracted the attention of the Marquess Wellesley. His brother Henry Wellesley, as Resident of Oudh had brought to his notice the distracted condition of that province. Dating his letter, Bareilly, August 5, 1802, Henry Wellesley wrote to the Governor-General :

"Such is the distracted state of the Sikh country, that Mr. Louis (one of General Perron's officers) appears to have obtained possession of a considerable tract of country without the least resistance having been opposed to him. There can be no doubt of General Person's intention to assume as large a portion of the Punjab as he may think himself able to manage, or it may be convenient to him to retain, and it is equally certain that the actual state of that country will render it an easy conquest to anything like a regular force.

"One of the greatest dangers to be apprehended from the establishment of a French force in the Punjab is the means it would afford the French force of extending their conquest down the Indus, and of securing a communication with the sea by means of that river. This would remove every obstacle to their receiving supplies of men and stores from Europe, for there is no British force on that side of India nor are there any native powers, situated at the mouths of the Indus, capable of opposing a regular force with any prospect of success."

The opinion of the military adventurer, George Thomas, as to the ease with which the Panjab could be conquered, was also at that time well known. But it was not the policy of the Marquess Wellesley at that time to fight the Sikhs or annex their country. On the contrary, he wanted to cultivate their friendship and raise them into a power as a buffer state against the Afghans on the one hand and the Marathas on the other.

Unfortunately for the Punjab, Ranjit Singh was no statesman. Had he been so, he would have adopted a course different from what he did at this critical period of the history of the British in India. In the Doab, that is the territory between the rivers Satla and Jumno, were a number of petty Sikh chieftains who had been, before second Maratha war, vassals of the Maharajs Sindhia. On the eve of the war with the Marathas towards the end of the year 1803, the English servants of the E. I. Company under the Governor-General's instructions had opened intrigues with these Sikh chieftains.

making to secure the friendship of the king of Cabul, hence the India Government repudiated the engagements made by captain Seton, and sent another Envoy (Mr. H. Smith) to Scinde, to renew the negotiations with that Government on the footing on which alone Captain Seton had been empowered to treat—namely, the admission, as a preliminary step to all further transactions, of a resident agent of the British Government (the commercial resident having been expelled in 1802).

"This measure is necessarily preliminary to the accomplishment of our ultimate purpose, that of withholding or detaching the Government of Scinde from connections with our enemies, as well as the more proximate purpose of securing an authentic channel of information and intelligence on points of the utmost importance to our interests. 'No specific engagement could be entered into with that government without the establishment of direct intercourse on a permanent footing,' 'the attainment of which will afford the means of watching its proceedings and obtaining authentic intelligence concerning the designs of our enemies.' (Secret and separate general letter)." (Pp. 177-178.)

Those chieftains did not render assistance to the Marathas and thus played into the hands of the British. In return for what they had done for the English these Sikh chieftains expected their sympathy and active co-operation in their troubles.

Had Ranjit been a far-seeing statesman he would have formed a confederacy with them and welded all these states into an United Sikh Empire. But on the contrary he was bent on their destruction. At first, to curry favour with the British, he proposed to betray and sell these chieftains of his race and creed to them. But when he found no favourable response from the latter to his proposal, he wanted to seduce all these chieftains and confiscate their properties and estates. To effect these he set out from Lahore and crossed the Satlaj. The chieftains of the Doab were naturally alarmed and they appealed to the British Government for help against Ranjit Singh. The Governor-General seemed to have been at first inclined to leave these chieftains to the tender mercies of Ranjit. In the second Maratha war, these Sikh chieftains had been as much useful to the British as the princes of Rajputana, but the British did not scruple to exhibit their bad faith towards the Rajput princes, as already narrated before. The Sikh chieftains would not have fared better than the Rajput princes but for the circumstances to be presently mentioned.

The Sikh chieftains of the Doab, as said before, appealed for help to the British Government, and in order to alarm Ranjit Singh and make him return to Lahore, they industriously circulated a report that their application had been favourably considered. H. H. Wilson writes :

"In order to discover the truth of this assertion, Ranjit addressed a letter to the Governor-General, stating that he had learned that troops were assembling at Jumna, and requesting to be informed of the cause. He declared his wish to continue on friendly terms, but ventured to add, 'The country on this side of the Jumna, except the stations occupied by the English is subject to my authority. Let it remain so.'"

"Although Lord Minto was resolved to resist the pretensions of Ranjit Singh to the exercise of any authority on the right bank of the Jumna, yet the policy of securing his concurrence in the scheme of defensive alliance which it was sought to frame against the hostile designs upon India avowed by the Emperor Napoleon, suspended the announcement of the Governor-General's sentiments, and Ranjit was referred for a reply to Mr. (afterwards Sir Charles) Metcalfe, whom it had been determined to send on a friendly mission to the Sikh ruler."\*

Metcalfe was a civilian and as such came out to India while yet in his teens. He received his initiation into the art of Machiavellian diplomacy under the Marquess Wellesley, and consequently he was always indebted to that Irish Governor-General for the interest the latter took in him. Metcalfe acted for some time as Governor-General of India. It was in that capacity that he wrote a letter to his patron, the Marquess Wellesley, dated Dec. 23, 1834. As this letter sheds much side-light on his character, it is reproduced below :

"My Lord,—Few things in life have given me greater pleasure than the receipt of your Lordship's kind letter delivered by Lieut. Campbell. It is now within a few days of thirty-four years since I had the honour of being presented to you. You were then Governor-General of India, and I was a boy of fifteen entering on my career, I shall never forget the kindness with which you

\* VII. pp 140-141.

treated me from first to last during your stay in India; nor the honor and happiness which I enjoyed in being for a considerable period a member of your family. So much depends on the first turns given to a man's course, that I have a right to attribute all of good that has since happened to me, to the countenance and favor with which you distinguished me at that early period. *My public principles were learned in your school, pre-eminently the school of honor, zeal, public spirit, and patriotism*; and to my adherence to the principles there acquired I venture to ascribe all the success that has attended me

The words put in italics in the above, clearly show what policy Metcalfe would have adopted in India towards the native States had he been appointed as its Governor-General. That he considered the school of Wellesley "the school of honor" is more than what we can understand, since that Irish Governor-General lacked all principles of honor and honesty. The secret and official letter which the Marquess Wellesley wrote to General Lake on the 2nd August, 1803, regarding the Sikh states and Ranjit Singh, was examined and despatched by Metcalfe. Hence he was quite familiar with the views which the Marquess Wellesley entertained towards Ranjit Singh. It is probable that on this account, he was chosen as ambassador to the Court of Ranjit Singh.\*

\* That Metcalfe was chosen as an envoy to Ranjit was due to the fact that he was a jingoist. Although a civilian, he loved war more than peace. Countess Minto in her work *Lord Minto in India*, (pp. 97-98), writes :

"The position of England relatively to Europe after the peace of Tilsit (June 1807) is thus commented on in a letter from a young Englishman in India to a friend: 'What an unexampled and surprising picture the state of Europe now presents; France, Russia, Austria, Prussia, Germany, Holland, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Italy, Turkey—all Europe, save little Sweden, combined against our country. We may truly call ourselves "*divisos orbe Britannos*." Although this is a state of things which no one could ever have wished to see, I confess that I feel a pride in it . . . I hope that we shall do as well as possible under such strange circumstances."

"We have at different times paid Austria, Prussia, France, and Germany, we preserved to Turkey a great portion of its Empire, driving out its enemies, the French; we have constantly fought the battles of Europe against France; and all powers are now ranged on the side of France against us. Hurrah for the tight little Island!"

Countess Minto continues :

"We should hardly have ventured to quote so glaring a specimen of a spirit described in the slang of the present day as Jingoism—the English language having apparently no term of reprobation for it—had the writer borne a name less known and honoured than that of Metcalfe."

"It was, however, the sort of spirit which, combined with conspicuous ability and strong character, had attracted the attention of Lord Wellesley, who when Metcalfe was only nineteen, sent him in a political capacity to the camp of Lord Lake, and which in this year 1808, marked him out in the judgment of Lord Minto for a still more important mission . . .

The importance of the Punjab and Afghanistan, through which countries the French and the Russians must pass in their contemplated invasion of India, was fully recognized by Minto and hence contracting alliance with them, (or if necessary, bringing their territories under the control of the East India Company), was considered expedient. In a minute dated 15th September 1808, he remarked that "even should France succeed in establishing an ascendancy in Persia, much would remain to be accomplished before India could be successfully invaded, and the hostility of the interjacent states, specially if seconded by the co-operation of the British power, might yet be expected to frustrate the design, or at least to reduce the invading army to a degree of debility

At that time, Metcalfe was Political Assistant at Delhi. So he set out from Delhi towards the end of August, 1808, and crossed the Satlaj on the 1st of September, and reached the camp of Ranjit Singh at Kasur on the 11th. On the

which would give the troops of the Government of India a decided superiority in the field." Hence the necessity of establishing a direct communication with those states was evident.

In a letter to the President of the Board of Control, dated 10th February, 1808, Lord Minto wrote :

"If the views of the enemy should extend to the direct invasion of India by an army proportioned to that undertaking, their march must probably be to the Indus, and must lead through the kingdom of Cabul and the territories of Lahore, . . . It has appeared to be extremely desirable to push forward a British agency as far beyond our own frontiers, and as near the countries from which the enemy is to take his departure, as possible. We have not, till of late, had much inducement to frequent or to make much enquiry concerning the countries beyond the Indus, and there are difficulties attending the usual means of establishing an amicable intercourse with those governments or their subjects. We cannot safely rely on the fidelity or discernment of native agents, either for furnishing information or accomplishing any political objects our interests might require. I understand that the employment of Europeans in such services would be subject to great difficulties. Regular and avowed embassies, which would furnish occasion to the fixed residence, during periods like the present, of Europeans qualified in those countries, would undoubtedly be best calculated to fulfil my present views, which aim, first at obtaining early intelligence of the enemy's designs and secondly at casting obstacles to his progress."

Lord Minto entertained hostile designs against Ranjit Singh. His selection of Metcalfe was also with that object in view. He wanted some pretext and sought means to provoke Ranjit Singh to hostilities. In his despatch to the Secret Committee of March 1808, he wrote :

"Although as a general principle we cordially recognize the wisdom and the justice of abstaining from all interference in the contests, disputes, and concerns of states with which we are unconnected by the obligations of alliance, and are fully convinced of the embarrassments and inconveniences of extending our protection to petty chieftains, who are unable to protect their territories from the aggressions of more powerful neighbours, yet we are disposed to think that cases may occur in which a temporary deviation from these general principles may be a measure of defensive policy, the neglect of which might be productive of much more danger and embarrassment, than the prosecution of it, and that the certain resolution of the Rajah of Lahore to subjugate the states situated between the Sutledge and the frontier of our dominion would, under other circumstances than the present, constitute a case on which, on grounds of self-defence, the interposition of the British Power for the purpose of preventing the execution of such a project, would be equally just and prudent. Yet the accomplishment of the more important views already described seems evidently incompatible with a rupture with him :

Again in another minute dated June 1808, he wrote :

"It is well known that the habitual and undistinguishing jealousy which is the personal character of Ranjit Singh, has been directed specifically against the British Government. He is aware that our interests and principles are unfavourable to some of the chief objects of his ambition, and, in addition to this particular cause of distrust, means have been found to create in his mind a still stronger jealousy amounting almost to personal apprehension."

"It is certain that our endeavours to open a communication with Cabul, and to establish intimate relations with that state, will furnish abundant matter of uneasiness, and supply fresh food to the jealousy entertained by Ranjit Singh, both of Cabul and of our Government."

So Metcalfe was sent to woo the Raja, but should the Sikh sovereign resist the overtures of the Christian Envoy, means had been prepared to annihilate him. Countess Minto in her work on *Lord Minto in India* writes :—(p. 154)

next day, the Sikh prince granted an interview to the British Envoy. "The first visits of oriental diplomacy," writes Kaye, 'are visits of courtesy and congratulation. It is a kind of diplomatic measuring of swords before the conflict commences."

Metcalf was received by Ranjit Singh with great cordiality and courtesy.\*

On the 16th, Ranjit Singh returned the visit of the English diplomat. It was on the 22nd that negotiations were formally opened. Ranjit was told that the French had designs on Afghanistan and the Panjab and that he ought to enter into an alliance with the English.

Metcalf wrote to the Governor-General that

"In the course of this conversation, I endeavoured, in conformity to the instructions of the Supreme Government, to alarm the Raja for the safety of his territories, and at the same time to give him confidence in our protection."†

In non-diplomatic language it means that he told a pack of lies to Ranjit Singh.

Ranjit Singh was not going to be so easily outwitted by the Christian diplomat. He asked Metcalf whether the British Government would recognize his sovereignty over all the Sikh states on both sides of the Sutlej. But Metcalf only replied that he had no authority to express the views of his Government on this subject. At this reply, Ranjit was much disgusted, and illiterate and wanting in manners as he was, his behavior towards the foreign envoy appeared hardly cordial or friendly. To show his defiance towards the English, he invaded the Doab and exacted tribute from some of the petty chieftains. All the while Metcalf still remained at his court as the accredited agent of the English.

In the meanwhile the danger of the so-called French invasion of India altogether disappeared and so the Governor-General was not very anxious to contract a friendly alliance with Ranjit Singh. Moreover, it would seem that the Envoy having espied out the country and the weakness of the military organisation of the Sikhs, the exaggerated notion of Ranjit's resources appeared to be a myth to him. Hence the Governor-General and his agent did not consider it necessary to any longer temporise with Ranjit Singh. On the 22nd December, 1808, Metcalf personally communicated to Ranjit the intentions of the Government of India, that the territories between the Saltaj and the Jumna were under British protection, and that he might retain such acquisitions as he had made on this side of the Saltaj previously to the existence of the relations which had been formed with the protected states, but that he must restore all that had been

"The Commander-in-chief received orders to prepare for an advance, and a private letter to him from Lord Minto shows that in the event of serious resistance from Ranjit, it was in the contemplation of Government to substitute a friendly for a hostile power between our frontier and the Indus. There is reason to believe that a considerable portion of the country usurped by Ranjit Singh is strongly disaffected, and should any grand effort be made, and be crowned with success, nothing would be more advantageous to our interests than the substitution of friends and dependants for hostile and rival powers throughout the country between our frontier and the Indus."

\* Kaye's *Lives of Indian Officers*, Vol. 1, p. 393.

† *Ibid.*, p. 394.



made subsequently, and that in order to guard against any future encroachments, a military post would be established on the left bank of the river.\*

When these communications were made to Ranjit Singh, he was furious, to quote the words of Kaye†

"He left the room, descended to the court-yard below, mounted a horse, and began caracolliing about with what the young English envoy described as 'surprising levity.' But it was not levity. He was striving to subdue his strong feelings, and was gaining time to consider the answer he was to give to the British Envoy. After a while he returned to another room and took counsel with his ministers, . . . . .

"On the same evening he sent a message to Metcalfe saying that the proposal of the British Government to send troops to the Sultaj was of so strange a character that he could not finally announce his determination till he had consulted with his chiefs, and that he proposed to proceed for that purpose to Amritsar, and he requested the British Envoy to attend him.""

But the English Government did not communicate its intention to Ranjit Singh without making a show of military operations. In the middle of January 1809, a detachment under Colonel Ochterlony crossed the Jumna and proceeded to Ludhiana, whilst an army of reserve under the command of Major-General St. Leger was prepared to support the advance, should protracted operations become necessary. The troops of Ranjit Singh fell back as Colonel Ochterlony's detachment approached.

Ranjit Singh was sorely irritated, and how he must have cursed himself for not affording aid to the Marathas in their struggle with the English, with whom at times he thought of trying conclusions! But an incident occurred which is said to have damped Ranjit's courage, and convinced him of his inability to successfully fight the English.

During the month of February, 1809, when Metcalfe was in Amritsar, the anniversary of the Muharram occurred, which the Shia Muhammadans of his escort celebrated, as usual, with public demonstrations of passionate sorrow and religious fervour. Since the ascendancy of the power of the Sikhs this celebration of the Muharram had been stopped and so the conduct and behavior of Metcalfe's escort gave great offence to the population of Amritsar, a place which is sacred to all Sikhs. The Akalis, a sect of Sikh fanatics, who are half soldiers and half saints, attacked the camp of Metcalfe. A little tact and ordinary courtesy would have dictated that Christian Envoy not to have allowed the Shia Muhammadans of his escort to celebrate the Muharram in the

\* These Sikh Chieftains were not now to be treated as allies but as dependants of the British Government, for they had to enter into an agreement by which their states were to be escheated and taken charge of by the British on failure of their heirs, the privilege of adoption was denied to them. It was in this manner the principalities of Amballa, Kaithal and several other trans-Saltaj Sikh states came into the possession of the British. Lord Dalhousie vigorously acted upon the policy which was first of all initiated by Lord Minto, who like himself was a native of Scotland.

Baron Hugel (Travels, p. 279) attributes the interference of the English to selfishness, the motive being the desire of benefiting by escheats, which the dissipated character of the chiefs was likely to render speedy and numerous.

† Lives of Indian Officers.

\* *Ibid*, p. 396.

sacred city of the Sikhs without the special permission of Ranjit Singh. Of course, the Akalis were fanatics and were no match for the trained soldiers of Metcalfe's escort. The steady discipline of the latter prevailed and the Akalis broke and fled. Ranjit Singh came up at the close of the affray and assisted in quelling the tumult. Metcalfe's camp was removed to a greater distance from the town.

This incident is said by the British writers to have made a great impression on Ranjit's mind. Kaye writes that Ranjit

"Saw clearly that the English, who could make such good soldiers of men not naturally warlike, were a people not to be despised."\*

How much truth there is in this assertion, it is impossible to say, for the incident above referred to, rests solely on the authority of the Christian Envoy and Christian writers, whose testimony could hardly be relied upon, since they are the interested party in the affair. This incident occurred in February and from the fact that the English did not demand any satisfaction from Ranjit Singh for his subjects attacking the escort of a friendly foreign mission, and also when we remember the fact that Ranjit Singh did not at once, after its occurrence, conclude a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance with the British, it appears to us that this incident did not influence the conduct of Ranjit towards the English.†

The British Government in order to carry on the negotiations to a satisfactory termination, had moved the troops and threatened Ranjit with hostilities. But as waging war against the princes of India was strictly forbidden by the authorities in England, it does not appear that Minto was serious as to going to war with the Sikh Prince. The negotiations dragged on from month's end to month's end till the 25th April, 1809, when a treaty was concluded which placed all the petty Sikh chieftains in the territory between the rivers Satlaj and Jamna under the protection of the British.\* But Ranjit Singh, illiterate and lacking in the foresight and forethought of a gifted statesman, imagined that he had his compensation for the sacrifices which he had made in gaining the

\* *Ibid.*, p. 397.

† In the history of the Sikhs, Captain Cunningham does not allude to this incident having influenced his conduct towards the English. In a footnote (page 138 2nd edition) he writes :

"Moorcroft ascertained that Ranjit Singh had serious thoughts of appealing to the sword, so unpalatable was English interference. The well-known Fukeer Uzeez-ood-deen was one of the two persons who dissuaded him from war."

\* \* Captain Cunningham writes :

"In the beginning of February 1809 Sir David Ochterlony had issued a proclamation declaring the Cis-Sutledge states to be under British protection, and that any aggressions of the chief of Lahore would be resisted with arms. Ranjit Singh then perceived that the British authorities were in earnest, and the fear struck him that the still independent leaders of the Punjab might likewise tender their allegiance and have it accepted. All chance of empire would thus be lost and he prudently made up his mind without further delay. He withdrew his troops as required, he relinquished his last acquisitions and at Amritsar, on the 25th April 1809, the now single chief of Lahore signed a treaty which left him the master of the tracts he had originally occupied to the south of Sutledge, but confined his ambition for the future to the north and westward of that river."

friendship of the English and currying favor with them by the latter allowing him a free hand over the territories and peoples to the North and West of the Satlaj. By this clause of the treaty it was to be clearly understood that Ranjit Singh was to invade the dominions of the King of Kabul. There was not much love lost between the Sikhs and the Afghans and this treaty was meant to widen the differences between those two peoples. This treaty served to make Ranjit Singh the catspaw of the British for their ulterior purposes and render the Panjab the buffer state against the Afghan monarch and the threatened invasion of India by the combined forces of France and Russia through Central Asia. It was on this account that Elphinstone's embassy to Peshwar, to which reference will be presently made, did not conclude any definite treaty with the Afghan monarch.

The mission to Afghanistan was entrusted to Elphinstone. It was feared that the combined forces of France and Russia would invade India through Afghanistan, and therefore it was considered necessary to despatch an embassy to the King of Kabul\* Shah Suja was the reigning monarch at that time at Kabul. The diplomatic mission of Elphinstone consisted in endeavouring to rouse Shah Suja's fears for his own safety and to play him off against Persia. It was not the policy of the British Government to enter into any alliance with the Afghan monarch, although Elphinstone was at the same time told that "should the contracting of these engagements be absolutely required by the king the eventual aid to be afforded by us ought to be limited to supplies of arms, ordinance, military stores, rather than troops."

The mission did not pass through the Panjab. Perhaps at this time the British Government feared that Ranjit Singh would not allow passage to the mission. As said before Ranjit kept neutral while the Marathas were struggling with the English for their independence and their country. Ranjit again, did not object to the British troops under Lake penetrating to the heart of the Panjab in pursuit of Holkar. For concluding an offensive and defensive alliance with the English, Ranjit was even willing to betray the chieftains of his creed occupying the tract of the country between the Satlaj and the Jamna. But all his labors and sacrifices for the sake of the British had been in vain. He had never derived any benefit so far from them and was naturally much disappointed. So it appears that the British Government of India, at this time, had no face to ask for a further favor from Ranjit to allow the mission to pass through the Panjab to the court of the ruler of Afghanistan. Consequently the mission proceeded by the route of Bikanir, Bhahwulpur and Multan, and reached Peshwar on the 25th of February, 1809.†

\* Countess Minto in her work on Lord Minto in India writes :

"We are informed that papers exist to prove that Bonaparte had fixed on the Gomul Pass, leading from Guznee to Dera Ismael Khan, as the line of his advance from Afghanistan into India." (p. 168. f. n.)

† After reaching Multan the mission were detained for some time while communications were carried on by letter with the king of Cabul. For without his consent and the protection of a guard from His Majesty, it was impossible to travel among the tribes beyond the Indus. The answer to Mr. Elphinstone's application was long in coming, for, as they afterwards learned, the news of the

At that time the tract of the country through which Elphinstone proceeded to Afghanistan was a *terra incognita* to the British Government of India. It would seem that the object of the mission was as much to gather information regarding the country, as to spy out the resources of the Afghan monarch. Afghanistan was at this period the scene of unhappy internal dissensions and its ruler a victim of domestic feuds. Shah Suja granted an interview to Elphinstone on the 5th of March, 1809. He showed great courtesy and hospitality to the mission and as he was given to understand that the British Government was desirous of entering into a friendly alliance with him, he naturally expected help and co-operation from the mission in extricating him from his domestic troubles. But in this he was dissatisfied. Kaye writes that Shah Suja

"was distracted by domestic cares. He had a dangerous revolution to cope with in his own kingdom. He did not wish the British Mission to proceed any further into the heart of his dominions, which were in a distracted state; indeed, the best advice he could give to the English gentlemen was, that they should go home as fast as they could, unless they were inclined to help him against his enemies. When a man's own house is on fire it is no time to alarm him on the score of remote dangers and he soon found that the British Government would not help him to extinguish these domestic flames."

Poor deluded Shah Suja! Had he known that it was the British Government which was at the bottom in enkindling these domestic flames, for it was the interest of that Government to do so, and for the avowed object of which it had sent an embassy to Persia and paid a subsidy in money to the Persian Government, he would not have expected the British Government to help him to extinguish these domestic flames.

To quote Kaye again :

"The Afghan Ministers, it must be admitted, argued the case acutely and not without some amount of fairness. They could not see why, if the English wished the King of Cabul to help them against their enemies, they should not in their turn help the King to resist his; but as it was they said all the advantage was on our side, and all the danger on the side of the King. 'They stated,' wrote Mr. Elphinstone in a letter to Lord Minto that an alliance for the purpose of repelling our enemy was imperfect and the true friendship between two states could only be maintained by identifying their interests in all cases; that Shah Mahmud had no influence over the Douranees and would be obliged—if he obtained the crown—to put himself under the protection of the Persians to maintain his authority; *that he had before connection with that people and was naturally inclined at them; and that from the moment of his restoration to the Government of this country we might consider the French and Persians as already on the Indus.*"

The importance of the words put in italics will be easily understood when the fact is remembered that Malcolm was sent in 1799 to Persia by the Marquess Wellesley to instigate the king to create distraction. As said before, a subsidy even was paid to

approach of the mission was at first regarded with strong prejudice and distrust, the Afghan nobles disliked the idea of an alliance between the king and the British power, as likely to strengthen him to their detriment, and the king himself thought it very natural that the British should seek to profit by the internal dissensions of a neighbouring kingdom, and endeavour to annex it to their empire. Curiosity is said to have had much to do with the final decision to receive the mission at Peshawar. —*Minto in India*, pp. 161-162.

\* *Ibid.*, pp. 241-242.

the Persian King to carry out this atrocious piece of business. The object of the British Government was gained, for Shah Mahmud with the help of the Persians raised the standard of revolt in Afghanistan, seized the Afghan monarch Zaman Shah, deposed him, put out his eyes and placed him in close confinement in the Bala Hissar at Kabul. But Shah Mahmud did not retain his ill-gotten power very long. He was, dethroned by Shah Suja in 1803.

So the deposition and blindness of Zaman Shah relieved the British Government of the incubus of the invasion of India with which the Afghan monarch had threatened them so often. The domestic dissensions and internecine feuds in Afghanistan, brought about through the instrumentality of the Persian King prevented the successor of Zaman Shah from ever carrying out his threat into execution.\*

To keep Persia and Afghanistan always at war with one another and never allow them to unite and make a common cause seemed to have been the object of Elphinstone's mission. As said before, Malcolm had succeeded in playing off Persia against Afghanistan and now Elphinstone was trying to pit the Afghan ruler against the Persian monarch. But no treaty of any definite character was concluded with the Afghan sovereign to instigate him to invade or create distractions in the territory of Persia. There are two reasons to be assigned for the English refraining from any assistance to the Afghan ruler in extinguishing his domestic flames. The first reason was that they did not want to have a prosperous and happy Afghanistan ruled over by Shah Suja, the brother of Zaman Shah, who had so often threatened them with the invasion of India: they were afraid that Shah Suja might carry into execution the often repeated threat of his brother and invade India, if his subjects in Afghanistan were happy and contented and did not rise in revolt against their ruler. The second reason which influenced the English in refusing to contract a defensive alliance with

\* "Two years before Malcolm went to Persia, a Persian nobleman naturalised in India, named Mehdi Ali Khan, had been sent to Teheran by the Governor of Bombay, with instructions to take measures for inducing the Court of Persia to keep Shah Zemaun in perpetual check (so as to preclude him from returning to India), but without any decided act of hostility.' What Mehdi Ali Khan did in Persia, is described by Lieut.-Colonel P. M. Sykes, in his History of Persia (Vol. II, p. 997) as follows :

"Mehdi Ali Khan, a skilful diplomatist of the Persian school, had written letters from Bushire to the Court at Teheran in which he excited the indignation of the Shah by an account of atrocities committed by the Sunni Afghans on the Shias of Lahore, thousands of whom, he declared, had fled for refuge to the territories ruled by the East India Company, and at the same time urged that if Zemaun Shah were checked a service would be rendered to God and man. He stated, furthermore, that the Governor-General did not at all apprehend an Afghan invasion of Hindustan, because the fame of the English artillery was well known. As an example of what English troops could do he asserted that seven hundred of these brave soldiers had defeated the army of Suraj-ud-Daula, numbering three hundred thousand men."

"In the autumn of 1799 Mehdi Ali Khan was received in person by the Shah. Spending large sums in presents, he succeeded in persuading the Persian monarch to continue hostilities against Afghanistan and he then returned to Bushire where he met Captain Malcolm, who had recently landed on his first memorable mission."

the Afghan ruler is to be found in the fact that they had to compensate Ranjit Singh for his renouncing all claims over the chieftains of the Doab, by giving him a free hand in conquering territories to the North and West of the river Indus. Had they formed an alliance with Shah Suja, there would have been no chance for Ranjit Singh to extend his dominions. They knew that the Sikh prince—whom they were wont to call the Lion of the Panjab—although no statesman, was an ambitious, capable and skilful general. He could have given them much trouble had he any inclination of doing so. Moreover, Ranjit had, on two previous occasions, obliged them first by his remaining neutral and not rendering any aid to the Marathas in their struggle with the English, and secondly, by his permitting the troops under Lake to penetrate into the Panjab in pursuit of Holkar.

It would not have done, therefore, to have contracted a defensive alliance with Shah Suja and restricted the ambitious schemes of Ranjit. Moreover, as a French writer has said, the English encouraged the Sikh prince to invade the territories of the Afghan monarch for they knew that on the death of Ranjit the Panjab as well as his conquests in the Afghan territory would pass into their hands.

Even so early as the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Afghans seem to have been acquainted with "*Perfide Albion*" Regarding the conversation with Mulla Jafar, an Afghan minister, Elphinstone writes :

"He said that he did not believe that we intended to impose upon the king, but he did not think that we were so plain as we pretended to be. . . . He frankly owned that we had the character of being very designing and that most people thought it necessary to be very vigilant in all transactions with us."

The English were secretly glad at the disturbed condition of Afghanistan. Elphinstone espied out the resources of the country and, according to Kaye, Elphinstone

"had indeed done all that it was requisite to do, for the dangers which he had been sent to anticipate had disappeared by themselves. The king of Cabul undertook to prevent the passage of the French and Persians through his kingdom, and the English undertook to provide money for the purpose."†

Elphinstone and his party returned to India through the Panjab. Of course, there was no objection on the part of Ranjit to grant them the passage through his country, for he had now entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with them.

Thus then Lord Minto's Government took every precaution to preserve the supremacy of the British influence in India, and duly safeguarded themselves against the rising of the inhabitants of the territories at that time under the administration of the English, as well as protected India against the native powers of Hindustan. For the first time in the history of British India, the fear of the invasion of India from its North-Western frontier seized the minds of the Christian rulers and hence the various missions were sent to the Panjab, Afghanistan, Sindh and Persia, not only to contract defensive alliance with the rulers of those countries but also to spy out the military resources and strategical positions of those states.

\* *Ibid.*, p. 244, f. n.

† *Ibid.*, p. 247.

But the British still apprehended danger from the sea. It was not impossible for any maritime power to invade their possessions in India by sea and so it appeared necessary for Lord Minto's Government to reduce such places as might serve as bases of operations for any maritime nation hostilely inclined against British supremacy in India. The influence of sea-power was fully recognized by them, but at this time there was not the remotest chance for any nation to approach the shores of India and invade the country by the sea. The danger was apprehended from France, but at this time the French navy was almost a thing of the past and hence Napoleon tried to conquer the sea by land. But this naval weakness of France gave the opportunity to the English to attack and capture their colonies in different parts of the world. Napoleon's schemes of conquest of the different countries of Europe necessarily left the French colonies unguarded by the French fleet and so the British Government made elaborate preparations for their invasion.

The French possessions in the Indian Ocean, *viz.*, the Isle of France, Bourbon and Rodriguez, were always considered as sources of danger to the British Government in India, since these islands harboured asylums to pirates who inflicted serious damage upon the Company's commerce. These islands were also looked upon as the bases of operations against the British possessions in India in the event of the outbreak of hostilities between the French and the English. Tipu was alleged to have sent his agents to the Isle of France for the purpose of enlisting French recruits in his army to fight the English.

The reduction of these French possessions was considered to be of great political importance by the authorities both in England and India, and Marquess Wellesley had at one time seriously thought of sending expeditions against them. But the low state of finances did not allow him to carry out his intention into execution, as any expedition against the islands would involve great expense both for their reduction and maintenance. But in 1809, the British Government at home authorized Minto to attempt a rigorous blockade of the French Islands in the Indian Ocean. It will be foreign to our purpose to describe in detail the methods which were adopted to execute this order, which finally led to the capture and annexation of those French colonies in 1810. Suffice it to say that India had to bear the expenses of the expedition. By the reduction of these islands, the energies of the naval power of France in the East were paralysed once for all, and the French incubus no longer disturbed the sleep of the rulers of British India.

The attention of the authorities in England was also drawn to the Dutch possessions in the East.

Accordingly under instructions from the home authorities, Minto fitted out an expedition to reduce them. By the end of 1811 all the Dutch possessions in the Indian Archipelago came under the rule of the British Government.

After the termination of the expedition against the Dutch possessions in the East, Minto was recalled and he left India in 1813.

The authoress of "*Lord Minto in India*" (pp. 343-344) writes :

"Lord Minto had intimated to the Directors his wish to be relieved from the government early

in 1814. The day he had named as that of his departure from India was indeed January, 1. In the summer of 1813 he learned that, six months before, it had been decided to supersede him in the government of India, and that the appointment had been bestowed on the Earl of Moira, to whom the Prince Regent conceived himself peculiarly indebted for the assistance rendered by him while a new ministry was in process of formation after Mr. Perceval's death. . . . Nothing could be more undeserved, more ungracious, or more discreditable to the parties concerned, than the recall of an able and uniformly successful Governor-General to make room for a personal friend of the Regent's."

During his administration of six years, Minto did not extend the boundaries of the British possessions in India either by means of force or fraud. But he preserved the Empire by means which are Machiavellian and for which the natives of England ought always to be grateful to him. He came out to India at a period when the military prestige of the British was at its lowest ebb and when their public credit was shaken. It was the most critical period for them in India. To have preserved the ship of the state in such a stormy weather is a strong testimony to his ability and talents. He safeguarded the interests of his country by taking steps which had the effect of preventing insurrections in and foreign invasions of India. The methods which he adopted have already been mentioned : and if the end justifies the means, then Minto must be pronounced to have been a very successful administrator from the point of view of the British people.



## CHAPTER LXIII

### THE MUTINY AT MADRAS

The Mutiny at Vellore produced great sensation in England. There is little doubt now that it was caused by the belief then prevalent that the authorities in India, especially in Madras, were bent on converting the natives of this country to Christianity, Lord William Bentinck, as Governor of Madras, gave every encouragement to the Christian missionaries to carry on their proselytising propaganda in India. It was, therefore, necessary to remove the impression from the minds of the people then under the administration of the East India Company that the authorities meant to interfere with their religious customs and observances. Great credit is due to Minto for doing everything in his power to discourage the invasion of India by Christian missionaries. In his letter to the Chairman of the East India Company, dated September 1807, he wrote :

"The only successful engine of sedition in any part of India must be that of persuading the people that our Government entertains hostile and systematic designs against their religion."\*

The Serampore Mission, headed by Dr. Carey, printed many books in the vernaculars. Lady Minto in her work on Lord Minto in India writes :

"Soon after Lord Minto's arrival, some of these publications attracted the attention of Government and it being undeniable that they were calculated to offend the feelings of the native population containing as they did offensive attacks on the Hindu mythology, and the Mussulman Prophet the Secretary to Government received instructions to communicate to the Revd. Dr. Carey, the leading member of the mission at Serampore, a resolution arrived at by the Governor-General in Council to place their press under regulation, and to suspend the practice of public preaching by the natives in the native dialects at the seat of Government.

"In an official letter addressed by Mr. Edmonstone to Dr. Carey it was stated that 'the issue of publications and the public delivery of discourses of the nature above alluded to, are evidently calculated to produce consequences in the highest degree detrimental to the tranquility of the British dominions in India, and it becomes the indispensable duty of the British Government to arrest the progress of any proceedings of that nature. In the present instance this objection is enforced by the necessity of maintaining the public faith, which under the express injunctions of the Legislature has been repeatedly pledged to leave the native subjects of the Company in India to the full, free, and undisturbed exercise of their respective religions.'†

The natives of India set more store by their religions than by anything else. Thus they were easily conciliated to the Company's Government by the attitude which Lord Minto manifested towards the Christian missionaries.

But the case was quite different with Minto's co-religionists and compatriots in India, who came out to this country as "birds of prey and passage," to shake the pagoda tree, amass "filthy lucre", and then return home laden with their booty to

\* *Minto in India*, p. 62.

† (*Ibid.*, p. 65).

play "the Nabob" there. Anything which touched their pockets made them indignant and turn against those who ventured to do it.

The financial crisis of the Government of India at the period when Minto came as Governor-General has been already mentioned before. To tide over the crisis, it was necessary to make retrenchment in all departments of the state.

Military officers, in addition to their salary, drew several other allowances. Thus it was the practice to grant to the commanders of the native corps a monthly allowance known as the 'Tent Contract,' meant for the provision of camp equipage. In the Madras Presidency, Barlow, as its Governor, abolished, with the approval of the Supreme Government in Bengal, this allowance by a general order, dated May, 1808. This was enough to offend the British officers and make them rise in mutiny.

Perhaps there would have been no mutiny of these officers had the Governor of Madras been possessed of tact. But Barlow was a man of stern, cold, and repulsive manners, and the civil as well as military British servants of Madras considered it a grievance that a man who had been bred to public business in Bengal should have been appointed to the highest office, without having the advantages of local and personal knowledge of that presidency.

The British officers burst into open mutiny at Masulipatam, Seringapatam, Hyderabad and other places. Minto was of opinion

"that the successful combination of the Bengal officers in 1796, when Government at home took fright, is the real root of the late insubordination in the army of the Madras Presidency."

The mutiny took a serious aspect when

"blood was shed in Mysore, for, as a mutinous battalion was marching from Chitteldroog to join the mutineers at Seringapatam, they encountered resistance from a body of dutiful troops, and fired upon and received the fire of their own countrymen or friends and fellow-soldiers. This was a dangerous spectacle to exhibit to the armed sepoys and the native inhabitants."† Macfarlane's *Our Indian Empire*, (Vol. II. p. 181).

In quelling the mutiny of the Christian European officers, such steps were not taken as are invariably done when the mutineers happen to be non-Christian and coloured persons. No Christian officer was hanged or blown from the mouth of cannon. To conciliate the mutineers and to redress their grievances, as it were, some of the most distinguished political officers of the time, such as Colonels Barry Close, John Malcolm, the Honourable Arthur Cole, were sent to stations where mutinous dispositions were manifested. Minto even went to Madras to make the mutineers understand the serious situation they had created by their conduct. No one can say

\* Lord Minto in India, p. 210.

† No British historian of India has given an account of the Mutiny at Madras in greater detail than Mr. Macfarlane, who in the footnotes at pages 182-184 has narrated things not referred to by other writers. He concludes his footnote at page 184 as follows :

"In the histories and other books written by the functionaries and servants of the East India Company, we see, generally, a disposition to glide over the whole of this story as quickly as possible. This surely is not the proper way to treat a subject which was so important and so critical at the time and which contains lessons and warnings proper for all times."

what the consequences would have been, had the mutineers delayed in returning to their allegiance to the properly constituted authorities. It would have perhaps encouraged the Marathas to try to get back the territories that had been wrested from them a few years before and the Nizam and the Peishwa, prisoners as they were, would have tried to come out of their prisons and throw off the yoke of the subsidiary alliance that had been placed on their necks by the British.\*

\* M. Victor Jacquemont, writing to his father on October 28th, 1830, said :

"The English officers of the Indian army are exceedingly dissatisfied with Lord William and the Court of Directors on account of the reduction recently made in their pay. Twenty years ago, a sedition of this kind, provoked by the same cause broke out in the Madras Presidency. . . . . This happened at a critical period. If Runjit Sing had then crossed the Sutledge, the Mahrattas and Bundelcund, which were not then reduced to submission, and marched to Bengal, the British power would no doubt have re-entered into the limits conquered by Lord Clive : but the revolted of Madras soon perceived the danger and returned of themselves to their duty, . . . . . and *the Government had the weakness not to shoot a single officer.*" (Pp. 323-324, Vol. I. of *Letters from India*. The italics are ours.)

## CHAPTER XLIV

### THE MARQUESS OF HASTINGS'S ADMINISTRATION ( 1813-1823 )

The nobleman who succeeded Lord Minto in the Government of India deserves a very close study of his character to enable one to understand the nature of his Indian administration. His rule forms a very conspicuous signpost in the history of British India. His is the central figure in the Trinity of British Christian nobles who within the first fifty-six years of the nineteenth century, trampled the rights of the princes and peoples of Hindustan under foot, and succeeded by means of fraud and force in depriving Indians of their independence, and rivetting the chain of slavery round their necks. Wellesley, Hastings and Dalhousie constitute the Trinity of empire-builders in the Christian administration of India during the nineteenth century.

The Marquess of Hastings was a native of Scotland by nationality, and he entered the army while still in his teens. He served under Cornwallis during the American War of Independence. Like his chief, he had to surrender his sword to the leader of the American rebels, and thus his military career, at its very start, was anything but a success. As a nobleman of the united kingdom of England and Scotland, he had a seat in the Upper House of Parliament, but it does not appear that he ever cut a very prominent figure in politics. But by the manner in which he ingratiated himself with the ministry of the day in the first decade of the nineteenth century, he was chosen to establish a reputation for himself in India, where alone at that time it was possible to make amends for the failures sustained in Christendom and to win laurels, by diplomacy or by unsheathing the sword.

No satisfactory explanation has ever been given for the step which the ministry took in recalling Minto from India. But to us it seems that the ministry at that time wanted to bring more territory in India under the jurisdiction of their countrymen and so they did not like a peace-loving man like Minto to be at the helm of their affairs in India. They wanted the pursuit of a more vigorous policy in India in unison with their political affairs in Europe, so as to catch the imagination, kindle the interest and win the applause of the British people. This aspect of the question should always be borne in mind by all writers of Indian history: for the policy of the political party in power in England has often guided Indian affairs and have made them run parallel to those of England, after making every effort by strong advocacy and otherwise, to induce the majority of the British public and others, to look at things from their own view-point.

What was the state of England and of Europe at the time, then? Napoleon was the virtual dictator of the whole of Europe, and he held all the states of that continent within the hollow of his hand. England alone stood against him and spent money like water, to bribe all the powers of Europe in order to bring about his

downfall. But where did all this money come from? England at the beginning of the nineteenth century was not so rich as she was at its close. Her principal source of wealth was her commerce. It is well known that Napoleon prohibited the importation of English goods into any part of the vast European continent. Napoleon tried to conquer the sea by land. His navy had been destroyed by England and so he could not do any harm to England on the sea, but the loss which England suffered by the prohibition of the importation of her manufactured articles into any state of Europe was great. She had to make up this loss in the best way she could. There was no other way of effectually gaining this end than that of forcing her goods on India. England was the mistress of the sea, and India was the only country which Napoleon's octopus-like arms did not reach. The importance of India at this crisis to England has been fully appreciated by so competent a writer as Sir George Birdwood, who in his introduction to *The First Letter Book of the East India Company, 1600-1619*, states that it was the Company's possession of India which enabled England, at the commencement of the nineteenth century, to successfully resist the machinations of Napoleon I., and he declares that

"the continued possession of India will be our chief stay in sustaining the manufacturing and mercantile preponderance in this country in the crushing commercial competition with which we have now everywhere to contend."

It was by bleeding India that England succeeded in raising money to intrigue with other European powers against, and to fight with Napoleon. How the interests of India were at this time sacrificed for those of England is not well known to all. Till the beginning of the nineteenth century, India was not only an agricultural, but also a manufacturing country. Before the establishment of British rule, India was the greatest manufacturing country in the world. Her cotton fabrics used to be imported into every country of the civilised world. It was to buy her cotton fabrics that the Christian nations of Europe made their way to India. It was by destroying this cotton manufacture of India, that England succeeded in raising money to overcome Napoleon. In order to secure the cotton manufacture for herself, England forbade the importation of India's cottons into England; nay, on the contrary, when Napoleon had shut England out from the markets of continental Europe, she forced the East India Company to lower all the duties hitherto levied on English goods entering India. She thus flooded India with cheap cotton, and brought about the ruin of the Indian weavers and of Indian cotton manufacture. Regarding the destruction of the Indian cotton manufacture H. H. Wilson has written as follows :

"The history of the trade of cotton cloths with India affords a singular exemplification of the inapplicability to all times and circumstances of that principle of free trade which advocates the unrestricted admission of a cheap article, in place of protecting by heavy duties a dearer one of home manufacture. It is also a melancholy instance of the wrong done to India by the country on which she had become dependent. It was stated in evidence, that the cotton and silk goods of India up to this period (1813) could be sold for a profit in the British market, at a price from fifty to sixty per cent. lower than those fabricated in England. It consequently became necessary to protect the latter by duties of seventy and eighty per cent. on their value, or by positive prohibition. Had this not been the case, had not such prohibitory duties and decrees

existed, the mills of Paisley and of Manchester would have been stopped in their outset, and could scarcely have been again set in motion even by the powers of steam. *They were created by the sacrifice of the Indian manufacture.* Had India been independent, she would have retaliated, would have imposed preventive duties upon British goods, and thus would have preserved her own productive industry from annihilation. This act of self-defence was not permitted her, she was at the mercy of the stranger. *British goods were forced upon her without paying any duty, and the foreign manufacturer employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended on equal terms.*"\*

Thus by destroying India's cotton manufacture England established her market in India. The money required in order to bribe, corrupt and subsidise the states of Europe was so large that England was loaded with a very heavy debt. The resources of "Golden India" were indented upon to liquidate this debt. It was therefore necessary to bring under the British administration and to reduce as many independent states of India as possible. It seems clear then that Minto was replaced by the Marquess of Hastings to carry out the policy of the English ministry of the day to extend the boundaries of their empire,† to strangle the weaving industry of India, and thus to create a market for English goods and ultimately enrich England and enable her to hold her own against Napoleon.§

If we remember these facts and take into due consideration their significance, then we shall be able to fully understand this period of Indian history and the object of the wars which were carried on during the Marquess of Hastings's regime.

It has already been said before that there is a great deal of resemblance between the chequered military career of Cornwallis and that of the Marquess of Hastings. Cornwallis came out to India to retrieve his character and rehabilitate himself in the estimation of the English people. He was not only the Governor-General of India but also its Commander-in-Chief. To the functions of the statesman he added those of the soldier. Similarly when the Marquess of Hastings was sent out to India, he came in the double capacity of the Governor-General as well as of Commander-in-Chief. Whatever plausible arguments might be adduced in favour of this combination of civil and military duties in one person, at the time of the appointment of the Marquess of Hastings, can hardly apply to the circumstances of the period, when he was sent to govern India. The very fact of the Marquess of Hastings becoming the Military Chief of India, as well as its Governor-General, clearly indicates that the Ministry wanted to give him a free hand in the management of India affairs. It is quite probable that the Marquess of Hastings must have expressed a desire to be the Commander-in-Chief in India in addition to his other duties in order to leave a name in the temple of fame

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\* VI. p. 385. See also the present writer's *Ruin of Indian Trade and Industries*.

† In May 1823, the officers in London gave Lord Hastings a dinner; Lord W. C. Bentinck in the chair. Lord Hastings then declared that he had "followed in the footsteps of the Marquess Wellesley." In other words, he was as unscrupulous as Lord Wellesley.

§ Not only did the acquisition of India not cost England a single farthing, but on the contrary, India was made to pay for all the wars which England waged against Napoleon, either for her own defence, or for the establishment of her supremacy as the First Power in the world.

as a military genius, and thus to wipe out the blot that was attached to his name for having surrendered his sword to Washington.

The following facts then should be remembered in order to fully understand the Indian career of the Marquess of Hastings :

1. The recall of Lord Minto, which has never been satisfactorily explained.
2. The appointment of the Marquess of Hastings as Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of India.
3. The resemblance between the chequered military careers of the Marquess Cornwallis and the Marquess of Hastings in America.
4. The situation of political affairs in Europe, and how Napoleon had prohibited the importation of English goods in all the countries of that continent.
5. The necessity felt by England for raising money to corrupt, bribe and intrigue with other European powers against Napoleon, and also to fight him in order to establish her supremacy as the First Power in the world.
6. England succeeded in raising money by destroying the cotton manufacture of India.

The English writers of Indian history have not brought out in bold relief the fact that the Marquess of Hastings was the prototype of the Marquess of Dalhousie as regards his policy towards the independent native states of India. In one of his papers Mr. Henry St. George Tucker, who was Director of the East India Company, writes :

"The Marquess of Hastings took charge of the government in 1813, and manifested at a very early period, that his views of our foreign policy differed widely from those of his immediate predecessors,"

In a foot note to this passage Mr. Tucker adds :

"I don't think it necessary to refer to his lordship's minutes and correspondence, in which this opinion is expressed. It is throughout maintained and acted upon."

Then Mr. Tucker continues :

"He (the Marquess of Hastings) was evidently impressed with the opinion that the absolute supremacy of the British power throughout India must be maintained, and that the native states must be united in one great federative league, under a supreme head, which should control and protect them."

"This broad scheme of policy, which has found some strenuous advocates, is very much in unison with that which was for some time successfully pursued in Europe by the late ruler of France (*i. e.*, Napoleon Bonaparte). . . . It was perfectly simple in its own nature, and reducible to one single proposition—the establishment of the well-meant despotism of a powerful state over all its weaker neighbours."

If we bear the above in mind, we shall be enabled to understand all the wars which the Marquess of Hastings waged against the native powers of India.

\* *Memorials of Indian Government*, being a selection from the papers of Henry St. George Tucker. Edited by John William Kaye. Pp. 283-284.

## CHAPTER XLV

### REFLECTIONS ON THE E. I. CO.'S CHARTER OF 1813

The Earl of Moira embarked at Portsmouth, on board H. M. S. *The Stirling Castle*, under command of Admiral Sir Home Popham, accompanied by the Countess of Loudon and Moria and his three eldest children, on the 14th of April, and landed at Madras on the 11th of September, 1813. It was during Earl Moria's voyage to India that Act 53 Geor. III. Cap. 155, commonly known as the East India Company's Charter of 1813, was passed in England.

It is necessary here to offer a few reflections on the East India Company's Charter of 1813.

The far-reaching consequences of the terms on which the Charter of the East India Company was renewed in 1813 have not received that attention from the writers of Indian history which they deserve. India had been conquered and ruled by other nations before the English became masters of the country. But none inflicted such miseries on her as the English. Other rulers of India were imperialists, that is to say, they were content to keep power in their hands and exercise it. But the English were primarily a nation of shop-keepers. They were not satisfied merely with becoming the rulers of India; they desired also to become shop-keepers in India and, therefore, opened shops in this country.

The commercial character of British rule in its present form dates from the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1813. True it is that the East India Company was a trading corporation. But they were not so much the importers of English manufactured goods into India as exporter of Indian goods to Europe. The deliberate destruction of Indian industries dates from 1813 when English goods were forced on India on the principle of Free Trade. Since that date has commenced India's degradation.

If economically the renewal of the Company's Charter was disastrous to India, it was no less morally also. Since time immemorial, "plain living and high thinking" has been the guiding principle of the natives of Hindustan. But the philanthropists of England, on the occasion of the renewal of the Charter in 1813 were anxious to see Indians give up plain living. They wanted to make them luxurious and addicted to drinking, &c.\* How often was the question put to the witnesses who appeared before

\* Mr. Holt Mackenzie, in his evidence before the Commons' Committee, on the 23rd February 1832, said :

"I believe intercourse with Europeans leads to indulgence in the use of wine and spirits, which, though it may be lamented on the score of morals, must be beneficial to the revenue, their servants are generally better clothed, and the articles of clothing being subject to taxation, that would increase the revenue,.....

"Judging from Calcutta, there has been, I think, a marked tendency among the natives to



the Select Committees of the two Houses of Parliament whether the rich natives spent their superfluous wealth in the purchase of English commodities! Unless the natives of India were of luxurious and to some extent depraved habits, there was not much likelihood of their patronising English goods. So India, which was sober, India, which was abstemious, was to be made intemperate and luxurious, in order to extend the market of England. But the masses of the Indian people did not require any luxuries, for they had hardly any wants. Their wants were supplied by Nature and the arts of their country. So England had to destroy the industries of the Indians in order to oblige them to purchase English goods.

It is a pity that there was no Indian living in 1813 who could see through the designs of the English when the Company's Charter was renewed. Even the enlightened and far-seeing Ram Mohun Roy failed to do so. Had the Indians been able to understand the intentions of their rulers in 1813, the birth of the *Swadeshi cum* boycott movement would have then taken place. The success of that movement in India would have been as great then as it had been in America on the eve of the Revolution. But unfortunately the natives of India had been so successfully hypnotised by the English that they believed them to be their benefactors and that whatever they did was for the benefit of India.

It was because England wanted to create and extend her market in India, that the policy of exterminating the native states of India was mercilessly pursued. On the occasion of the renewal of the East India Company's Charter in 1793, through the exertions of Sir Philip Francis, a clause was inserted in the Charter Act that

"To pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, the honor, and policy of this nation," &c.

But no inquiry was made in 1813 whether that clause had been violated or not by the Company. No, in the Charter Act of 1813, when its framers showed their solicitude for promoting the happiness of the natives of India, knowing how flagrantly the provision of the Charter Act of 1793 contained in the clause quoted above, had been violated by Wellesley, did nothing to restrain any other Governor-General from following his example. That omission in the Charter Act of 1813 was a significant one.

indulge in English luxuries, they have well-furnished houses, many wear watches, they are fond of carriages, and are understood to drink wines."

Yes, it gladdened the hearts of many a Christian Anglo-Indian that the natives had taken to the drinking of wines. In his evidence before the Commons' Committee on the 24th March, 1832, Mr. Bracken said that

"Liquors in Calcutta are now consumed in large quantities by natives who can afford to purchase them."

In answer to another question the same witness said :

"I heard from a native shopkeeper in Calcutta, who is one of the largest retail shopkeepers, that his customers for wines, and brandy, and beer, were principally natives.

"1936. What should you say was the favorite wine among the natives?—Champaigne.

"1937. Formerly did they not consume any wine?—Very little, I believe.

• "1938. Is it not contrary to their religion?—I do not know whether it is contrary to their religion, but it is contrary to their habits it is not done openly, but when done it is a violation of their custom rather than of their religion."

No, it was not the interest of the English in 1813 to express their repugnance at the schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India as it was in 1793. They had to create and extend the market in India for English manufactures, and therefore, it was necessary to bring as much territory under the dominion of England as it was possible by means of fraud and force.

About the time when the Company's Charter was to be renewed in 1813, Sir Thomas Munro wrote :

"It is our political power, acquired by the Company's arms, that has made the trade to India what it is : without that power, it would have been kept within narrow bounds by the jealousy and exactions of the Native Princes, and by some, such as Tippoo, could have been prohibited altogether."

Munro represented the opinions and views of the politicians and statesmen of his time who had anything to do with India. Under the circumstance, it is quite reasonable to infer that the wars which were waged against the native powers of India after 1813 were not "repugnant to the wish, the honour, and policy" of the natives of England. That accounts for the honors and rewards that were conferred on Earl Moira and every subsequent Governor-General who followed in his footsteps.

While it is considered indefensible on moral considerations to tax the Roman Catholics of Ireland to maintain Protestant clergymen in their land, while people, although Christian, are protesting loudly against the Church of England Establishment in their midst, it is sad to think that the Charter of 1813 saddled India—a non-Christian country—with the cost of the Clerical Establishment. It was not fair dealing, nay, it was not even honest to do so.

The principle of religious neutrality which was the boast of the English in their Government of India was sacrificed when the Charter of 1813 permitted missionaries to proceed to India to preach the Gospel and convert its inhabitants. Religious neutrality demanded that the East India Company should have, when they permitted Christian missionaries to proceed to India and sanctioned a Clerical Establishment at the expense of the heathens, encouraged Hindu and Muhammadan priests to preach and practise their religions by giving them stipends out of the revenues of India. But this they did not do.

Next to the destruction of the Indian industries, the greatest wrong which the Charter of 1813 inflicted on the Indian people was the permission granted to the Europeans to freely resort to India. They believed that this would in time lead to the colonization of India, And this there can be no doubt was their intention. In this, they considered, lay the security and permanence of their rule over the natives of Hindustan. The oppressions and cruelties practised by the adventurers of England on the inhabitants of India would, they probably thought, serve to strengthen the British dominion, by dispiriting and disheartening the latter. Colonization means displacement, and so, perhaps, it was thought that the lives of the inhabitants of India would be almost of as much value to the British adventurers as those of the North American

aborigines to the Pilgrim Fathers, of the Mexicans and Peruvians to the Spaniards, of Kaffirs to the South African settlers and of Maoris to the Australian colonisers. It was probably for this reason, that, in spite of the protests of Warren Hastings and others who could speak with authority on the subject, the influx of Europeans into India was demanded. But owing perhaps to the numerous population of India, her advanced civilization and latent strength, Indians could not be treated as the natives of other regions had been by the white settlers.

The deliberate destruction of the Indian industries, making Indians give up their plain living and take to some of the vices as well as the luxurious life of the Western nations and thus demoralising them, allowing adventurers of Great Britain to freely resort to India to oppress and plunder its inhabitants, saddling non-Christian natives of India with the expense of a costly Christian clerical establishment permitting missionaries of the Christian persuasion to proceed to India to insult and outrage the religious susceptibilities of the non-Christians, conniving at the wars on the native princes and the annexation of their dominions in order to extend their commerce (for trade follows the flag), were considered by the scheming and designing politicians of England of more than a century ago as promoting the interest and happiness of the natives of India. It was "the duty" of England to pursue these measures from motives of philanthropy and altruism!

The natives of England were put to great straits by Napoleon, who threatened to cripple, if not altogether destroy, their industries and commerce by blockading the ports of the continent of Europe. They were anxious to create a market for their goods in India. With this object in view, they did all they could to impose such terms on the East India Company on the occasion of the renewal of their Charter in 1813 as were calculated to promote their interests. They covered their selfish motives under the cloak of philanthropy. But a couple of years after the renewal of the Charter in 1813, the battle of Waterloo was fought, which resulted in the capture and exile of Napoleon. This was of great importance to England. The English industries were no longer threatened with extinction. The blockade being removed from the ports of the continent against English goods and a market being created for them in India, gave a great impetus to the industries and commerce of England. The Marquess of Wellesley had waged wars against the native princes of India on the ostensible plea of removing centres of intrigue with the French. It was presumed that the French had been intriguing with the princes of India and as a measure of self-defence it was considered necessary by Wellesley to deprive the native states of their independence. Whether such a step was just or proper, and whether in going to war against the Indian princes, the Marquess was giving effect to that clause of the Charter Act of 1793 which declared, that "to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour and policy of the English nation," were questions which the Marquess never troubled to take into consideration.

But whatever justification might be urged in favour of the wars of the Marquess Wellesley, there was none for those of the Marquess of Hastings. The French

were no longer supposed to be intriguing with the native princes of India. The English historians do not tell us, but the terms of the renewal of the East India Company's Charter in 1813 do not leave any room for doubt, that the wars against and annexation of the territories of the native princes were prompted by the following two considerations, *viz.* :—(1) to extend the territories under the British supremacy in India in order to find a market for English goods, and (2) to bring hilly tracts under the jurisdiction of the company, in order to find suitable places for settlement and colonization by the English, which was sure to follow on their free influx into India.

The renewal of the East India Company's Charter in 1813 was designed to toll the death-knell of the Indian industries and to plunge Indians in poverty and misery.\* The merchants of England sent their agents and emissaries to learn the wants of the natives of the country and thus to enable them to successfully cater to their needs.

If India is to-day poverty-stricken, if the land of plenty is the home of scarcity and recurrent famines and of plague, if the people have been demoralised and Indian society disorganised, if there is unrest in India, the cause of all these troubles may to a great extent be traced to the Charter of 1813. It did not confer any concessions on Indians, on the contrary, it had the effect of making their lot much worse than before. Had the framers of the Charter Act of 1813 used plain and unvarnished language they should have worded the 33rd section of that Act as follows:

Whereas it is the duty of this country to enrich and aggrandise itself by all available means even if they lead to the infliction of miseries and degradation on the native inhabitants of the British dominions in India, etc., instead of the language of that section breathing lofty philanthropy and altruism. The sum total of the Charter of 1813 was that India was not for Indians but for Enoland and Englishmen.

Earl Mordaunt had to carry out and give effect to the policy underlying the Charter of 1813. If we keep this fact in mind, we shall be able to understand the secret of his Indian administration.

## CHAPTER XLVI

### THE NEPAL WAR

#### I. ITS CAUSES

The Marquess of Hastings arrived in Calcutta on the first of October 1813, and on the fourth of that month assumed charge of the office of Commander-in-Chief combined with that of Governor-General.

The first act of his administration was to declare war against Nepal. It was a war in which the reputation of the British arms was greatly tarnished and they suffered great humiliation by the reverses inflicted on them by their Hindu antagonists.

British writers have tried to make out that the Nepalese government was the aggressive party and thus obliged the British Government to go to war. We have not come across any narrative of the war written by the Nepalese, but a perusal of the English account of the war, leaves the impression on one's mind that if the Nepalese took the offensive first, they were provoked to do so by the behavior of their adversaries towards them. The disputes which led to the war could have been, in all probability, amicably settled, had the British been inclined to do so.

The disputes arose over certain lands on the borders of the British and Nepalese territories. These lands lay in the districts of Saran and Gorakhpur. The Nepalese government advanced their claims over these lands; while, on the other hand, the British Indian government contended that these lands belonged to Zamindars who were under their protection, since they paid land tax to them. These border questions had their origin in the fact of the frontier being ill-defined. Although attempts had, from time to time, been made to define the frontier these attempts generally ended in failure. It is on record that the British Government also connived at, and thus encouraged the Nepal government in their alleged aggressions on the territories of border zamindars who were under the protection of the British. Mr. Henry T. Prinsep in his "History of the Political and Military Transactions in India during the Administration of the Marquess of Hastings," writes:

"The Goorkhas, ... as each Raja in the hills successively fell before them, exterminated the family, and becoming heir to all its possessions took up likewise the old Raja's claims and contests with his neighbours. This brought them into contact with our Zemindars, who were, of course, unable to maintain themselves against such an enemy, and generally therefore had to resign the object in dispute, for unless when the encroachment was gross and easy of proof, it was vain to hope to interest the British Government in their favor. That government was, in the first place, no loser by the usurpation, for the public revenue was fully secured by the perpetual settlement, and by the increased value of the entire estate against any loss from a partial aggression. Moreover, it was, on principle, distrustful of the pretensions of its own subjects, which were generally exaggerated; while it regarded the Goorkha nation as a well-disposed neighbour, whom it was desirable to conciliate; hence an injured Raja of the plains would seldom succeed in procuring any powerful support to his cause, unless, as above observed the case was very flagrant, when *the Goorkhas would on remonstrance make reparation.*"\*

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\* Vol. I, pp. 63 *Et. seq.*

From the above it is quite clear that the pretensions advanced by the Zamindars were in most instances not correct and that the Nepalese government were open to reason and would make reparations when they were in the wrong. It is moreover also evident that neither the British nor the Nepalese government so far ever desired to settle any dispute by the sword. So far all the Border differences and disputes between the two governments used to be settled by means of commissions consisting of nominees of both the governments. Their findings were usually considered to be satisfactory to both the parties. But with the arrival of the Marquess of Hastings affairs assumed a different complexion. When he landed on the shores of India, a commission was inquiring into these disputes. Major Bradshaw was the nominee of the Government of India on this commission. But it would seem that he must have known the aggressive policy of the new Governor-General. On this ground alone, we can account for his offensive and ungentlemanly behavior towards the Nepalese Commissioners. It is on record that,

"they (the Nepalese Commissioners) had an interview with the Major, who made use of improper language towards them ; in consequence of which they remained silent ; and, seeing no business brought forward, they came away.""

This occurred in March 1814.

Lord Hastings also did not try to smooth matters. He addressed to the Raja of Nepal a peremptory requisition to evacuate the lands under dispute, and he sent the letter through the Magistrate of Gorukhpoor, giving that officer authority to order the advance of a body of troops to occupy the contested lands, in case the Raja's order for their evacuation should not arrive within twenty-five days from the date of his forwarding the letter. The Nepal Government was further informed that the Magistrate had these orders.

The die was now cast. The Government of India were fully determined upon hostilities. The peremptory tone of the Governor-General's letter to the Raja of Nepal was not calculated to preserve peace and amity between the two governments. The Gurkha government was not going to be so easily cowed down by the threatening attitude assumed by the British. Never in their history, had the Gurkhas so far known what defeats and disasters meant. They could look back with pride to their glorious past and the chivalrous conduct of their ancestors. Within the memory of their men then living, it was not forgotten how the Gurkhas had inflicted defeat on the English who had been made to precipitate an ignominious retreat. An expedition in 1767 against Nepal was undertaken by the Government of Bengal at the recommendation of Mr. Golding, the commercial agent at Betia, who feared that the success of the Gurkhas would ruin the trade he carried on with Nepal. Major Kinloch commanded the expedition. He advanced into the hills in October, 1767 and had not strength enough to establish a chain of depots to secure his communications with the plains ; consequently, having penetrated to Hurechurpoor, he was detained there by a nulla, not formidable, and the bridge and raft he constructed

\* Mills and Wilson, VIII, p. 12 foot-note.

were carried away after a fall of rain, which swelled the torrent unnaturally. The delay thus experienced exhausted his supplies, and produced sickness, so that, finally, he was obliged to return early in December.

The lesson then learnt was not easily and soon forgotten by the English. But they were also smarting under the humiliation they had then been subjected to. They were watching for nearly half a century for an opportunity to wipe out the disgrace of ignominious retreat before the Gurkhas. The Marquess of Hastings thought that the favourable opportunity for striking the blow at the Gurkhas had come.

The Gurkhas did not, of course, sue for peace. They boldly and bravely took up the challenge of the English. It would have shown pusillanimity and cowardice on their part, had they yielded to the threat. Their principal chiefs held a council, and deliberately considered the question of peace or war. The decision of the council was for war. Their determination indicated a lofty and patriotic spirit.

But they did not make their decision known to the British Government, because they were as yet quite unprepared for the war. The Governor-General's threatening letter was answered by mere common-place assurances of respect, and of a desire to keep up a good understanding with the English, but omitting all mention of the subject of the disputed lands.

Under such circumstances, it was proper for the India Government not to occupy the disputed lands without further consideration, but the Magistrate of Goruckpore was only too anxious to carry into execution the orders of the Governor-General, and so, on the expiration of the period, he addressed the commanding officer at the station, and three companies marched to occupy the lands. The Gurkha officers retired before them without making the slightest opposition.

But the Nepalese were not idle. When the troops under British officers occupied the disputed lands, they did not offer any resistance, because they had not till then made all the necessary preparations for the war. The Indian Government were thus thrown off their guard. Having established a few police Thanas in the disputed districts, and without anticipating attack or hostility on the part of the Gurkhas, the troops were ordered to retire from the disputed districts.

Here was the opportunity now for the Gurkhas to take advantage of the want of foresight and forethought on the part of the Indian Government. The troops had hardly returned to Gorukhpore when on the morning of the 29th May, 1814, the Gurkhas attacked the newly established police Thanas.

Of course, the British Government were not going to submit to this insult at the hands of the Nepalese. They did not at once declare war against the government of Nepal. The cause of this delay has been thus explained by Mr. Prinsep in his work already alluded to above :

"The formal declaration of war was purposely delayed till the close of the rains in order to allow time for persons engaged in trade with Nepal to withdraw their capital, as well as to give the Nepalese the opportunity of disavowing the act of Munraj, and punishing the perpetrators, if so inclined. They showed no disposition to do so, but, on the contrary, made the most

active military preparations along the whole extent of their frontier. The declaration of war was accordingly at length issued by his Lordship from Lukhnow, on the 1st November, 1814."<sup>9</sup>

Reviewing the whole situation of affairs after a century, the conclusions which any unprejudiced man would come to, is that the Nepalese were provoked to the war by the British and that the war could have been averted had the British Government been so inclined.

When the war against Nepal was declared, the financial position of the Company's government in India was very deplorable. The credit of the government bonds for monies borrowed was so low that twelve per cent discount was the regular calculable rate in the market. There was little possibility for government to raise more money by loan to carry on the war. Lord Hastings followed the examples set by some of his predecessors in squeezing the Nawab Vazir of Oudh. When he came out to India as its Governor-General the Prince of Oudh was Ghaziuddin Hydar. Prisoner as this Muhammadan Prince was his life was being made miserable by his Christian keeper, named Major Baillie. Reports of his ill-treatment by the latter reached the Governor-General, who proceeded to Lucknow, ostensibly to lessen the weight of the chain by which the Vazir was held in thralldom, but in reality to squeeze him to successfully carry on the war with Nepal. He succeeded so far that the Nawab Vazir, it was said, "out of gratitude," advanced him a loan of two and a half crores of rupees, with which money it was not difficult for Hastings to prosecute the war.

It was certainly not out of gratitude that the above-mentioned sum of money was paid by the Oudh Prince. How he was tortured to part with that amount has been narrated in "*Dacoitee in excelsis*" in detail in Chapter IV. In the course of that chapter, the author of that work writes:

"Such was the style in which the Indian Government approached its victim, while its policy was to flatter. The '*Mine of Munificence*' was thus worked with cautious approaches, and pious ejaculations, and every fresh shaft was opened with official prayers." When the '*Mine*' was impoverished, the process was different....."

But the people of Nepal did not forget that their country would not have been invaded, and a great portion of it sequestered, had not Oudh helped the British Government with money. Vengeance sleeps long but it never dies. It was, therefore, that the Nepalese came to the help of the English in the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and carried fire and sword through Oudh and plundered it to their heart's content, and killed thousands of its inhabitants in cold blood.



## CHAPTER XLVII

### THE NEPAL WAR

#### II. THE FIRST CAMPAIGN

The Nepal War was the bloodiest that had ever been fought by the British in India. The heroism and chivalry which the Nepalese showed on the occasion have become a matter of history. It will be of no use to enter into the labyrinth of details regarding the War, but a few salient points only are necessary to be mentioned.

It has been already said before that the new Governor-General had determined to distinguish himself by military exploits and by bringing new territories under the administration of the East India Company. It would seem that with these objects in view, he set out in June, 1814 for the Upper Provinces to make a tour of inspection. It was while touring in these provinces that he matured out his scheme of operations against the Nepalese. He had already threatened them with war and they replied to it by attacking the outposts and *thanas* which the British Government had established in the disputed districts. War was inevitable and the British made all the necessary preparations before formally declaring it.\*

\* It is certain that the British Government of India had at this time not a very high opinion of the military skill of the Gurkhas. They were not much to blame when the fact is taken into consideration that even the Sikhs had duped the astute Gurkha general Amar Singh Thapa, only four or five years previously. In the beginning of the 19th century the Sikhs were not recognized as a military power in India and it was not considered difficult by the British to conquer or defeat them. Lord Hastings' government must have argued in this wise, that if such an insignificant people as the Sikhs could outwit and defeat the Gurkhas it would certainly not be a difficult task for him to beat and vanquish the Nepalese. Captain Cunningham has very graphically described the manner in which the Nepalese Commander was duped by the Sikhs under Ranjit Singh. He writes:

"He (Ranjit Singh) was invited, almost at the same time (*i. e.* 1809) by Sundar Chand of Kotoch, to aid in resisting the Goorkhas, who were still pressing their long continued siege of Kangra, and who had effectually dispelled the Rajput prince's dreams of a supremacy reaching from the Jumna to the Jhelum. The stronghold was offered to the Sikh ruler as the price of his assistance, but Sundar Chand hoped in the meantime, to gain admittance himself, by showing to the Goorkhas the futility of resisting Runjit Singh, and by promising to surrender the fort to the Nepal commander, if allowed to withdraw his family. The Maharaja saw through the schemes of Sundar Chand, and he made the son of his ally a prisoner, while he dexterously cajoled the Kathmandoo general Ummer Singh Thapa, who proposed a joint warfare against the Rajput mountaineers, and to take, or receive in the meantime, the fort of Kangra as part of the *Goorkha* share of the general spoil. The Sikhs got possession of the place by suddenly demanding admittance as the expected relief. Sundar Chand was foiled, and Ummer Singh retreated across the Sutlej, loudly exclaiming that he had been grossly duped. The active Nepalese Commander soon put down some disorders which had arisen in his rear, but the disgrace of his failure before Kangra rankled in his mind, and he made preparations for another expedition against it. He proposed to Sir David Ochterlony a joint march to the Indus, and a separate appropriation of the plains and the hills, and Runjit Singh, ignorant alike of English moderation and of international law, became apprehensive lest the allies of Nepal should be glad of

The principality of Nepal at this time was small compared to the territories then under the administration of the East India Company. The Nepalese had a very long frontier to guard. It is true that they had subjected many of the petty hill chiefs and tribes on their frontier, but this added to their weakness rather than to their strength. Add to these, the discipline and superior arms of the British, and then will be quite clear that the Nepalese were to fight against odds and under great and many disadvantages. They were not in a position to bring into the fields so many fighting men and pieces of cannon as their adversaries. They had also neither the tact and knowledge nor the necessary funds to intrigue with and corrupt the men in the ranks of their opponents. These facts should not be lost sight of in connection with the war.

The war was formally declared against Nepal on the 1st November, 1814. But before this announcement, the British were making elaborate military preparations for the purpose of overawing the Nepalese. Mr. Prinsep writes that Lord Hastings "resolved to act offensively against the enemy along the whole line of frontier, from the Sutlej to the Koonce, and the following was the allotment ultimately made of this space to the several divisions that were brought into the field

"It was assigned to Colonel Ochterlony who commanded the post established at Loodheehana in 1808-9, to operate in the hilly country lying near the Sutlej. The force under this officer's command was exclusively native infantry and artillery, and amounted to about six thousand men, it had a train of two 18-pounders, ten 6-pounders, and four mortars and howitzers."

"From Meeruth in the Dooh, Major-General Gillespie . . . . . was to proceed first against the Dehra Doon . . . . . and as soon as this should be reduced, which it was expected would

a pretext for coercing one who had so unwillingly acceded to their limitation of his ambition. . . . . But Ummer Singh long brooded over his reverse and tried in various ways to induce the British authorities to join him in assailing the Punjab. The treaty with Nepal, he would say, made all strangers the mutual friends or enemies of the two governments, and Ranjit Singh had wantonly attacked the Goorkha possessions in Kotoch. Besides, he would argue, to advance is the safest policy, and what could have brought the English to the Sutlej but the intention of going beyond it?"

From the above it is evident then that the English had a very contemptuous opinion of the Gurkhas and it would seem that they intended to pit the Sikhs against the Gurkhas, for while they withheld all hopes of help to the Gurkhas, they nevertheless promised Ranjit Singh assistance against the Nepalese. Captain Cunningham writes :

"He (Ranjit Singh) made known that *he* was desirous of meeting Ummer Singh Thapa on his own ground, and the reply of the governor-general that he might not only himself cross the Sutlej to chastise the invading Goorkhas in the hills but that, if they descended into the plains of Sirhind, he would receive English assistance, gave him another proof that the river of the treaty was really to be an impassable barrier. He had got the assurance he wanted, and he talked no more of carrying his horsemen into mountain recesses."

This declaration of the policy of the British Government of India towards Ranjit Singh must have impressed the Gurkhas with the belief that the British did not like to live on terms of peace with them, and perhaps must have deterred them from amicably settling the frontier disputes. It is certain that had the British Government shown that spirit towards the Gurkhas which neighbours desirous of living on terms of peace with each other ought to do, and tried to make up differences between Ranjit Singh and the Nepalese, there would have been no misunderstanding between the English and the Gurkhas and thus in all probability, the Nepal war would not have taken place. But from the conduct of the English Government it seems that they provoked the Nepalese to go to war with them.

not be an operation of much time or difficulty, the force was to divide, and while a detachment attacked Gurhwal and Sirinugur, under the snowy range, the main body was to proceed against Nahn, to the west of the Jumna, in aid of the operations of Major-General Ochterlony against Umur Singh. General Gillespie's force originally consisted of his Majesty's 53d, which, with artillery and a few dismounted dragoons, made up about one thousand Europeans, and two thousand five hundred native infantry. . . . .\*

"From Benares and Gorakhpur a force was collected, and placed under the command of Major-General John Sullivan Wood, and his instructions were to penetrate by Bootwul into Palpa. This division consisted of his Majesty's 17th foot, nine hundred and fifty strong, and about three thousand native infantry; it had a train of seven 6 and 3-pounders, and four mortars and howitzers. . . . .

"Further east from Patna and Moorsheedabad, another force of a strength of near eight thousand men, including his Majesty's 24th foot, nine hundred and seven strong, was collected for the main attack, which was intended to be made direct upon the capital of Katmandoo by the passes between the Gundak and Bagmuttee. Major-General Marley was entrusted with the command of this army, and there was a train attached to it of four 18-pounders, eight 6 and 3-pounders, and fourteen mortars and howitzers. The Ganges was to be crossed by the troops from Patna on the 15th of November; and a further brigade was formed, from troops more distant stations, to follow the army and secure its depots and rear, as it advanced into the hills.

"Beyond the Koosee eastward, Major Latter was furnished with two thousand men, including his district battalion, for the defence of the Poornea frontier. This officer was desired to open a communication with the petty Raja of Sikkim, and to give him every assistance and encouragement to expel the Goorkhas from the eastern hills, short of an actual advance of troops for the purpose.

Thus the Government of India kept ready 30,000 men and 60 guns for the purpose of invading the country of the Gurkhas. The latter could, with great difficulty, muster 12,000 men, and these were ill-armed and ill-disciplined.

Major-General Gillespie's force was the first to penetrate the Nepalese frontier. On the 22nd of October he seized the Keree pass leading into the Doon, and thence proceeded to Dehra, without meeting any opposition. The Gurkha Government had allotted a force of about six hundred men under the command of Captain Bulbhudur Singh for the defence of the Doon. The prodigies of valour wrought by this Hindoo militant are worthy subjects for the pen of some epic poets of India. Regarding this episode of the Nepal War, a distinguished Indian gentleman (Babu Sishir Kumar Ghose) writes :

It is not quite correct to say that but for the English the Mussalmans would have cut the Hindus to pieces.

The English came when Hindus had not been able to recover completely from the shock of the destructive Mussalman occupation. This second shock broke them down completely. To ascertain what Hindus were like in the early days, we have to see whether there is yet any State in India which had not been bled and weakened by the Mussalman onslaught. The only State which escaped this destructive flood of Mussalman occupation, was Nepal. So when the English went to fight with the Nepalese, they found what the Hindus were like in early days, not demoralized by defeat and disaster. We shall here describe the first brush of the English with a handful of Nepalese, some three hundred in number, badly armed, badly protected, and weighted with the disadvantage of the presence of women and children.

War was declared against Nepal on the 1st November, 1814. A little before this declaration, it

was resolved to make a grand military demonstration for the purpose of over-awing the enemy. For this, four separate regiments had been ordered to march simultaneously from four different military stations. Major-General Gillespie commanded one of them.

On the 24th October, Gillespie's regiment reached Dehra Dun. Gillespie was not with his force, Colonel Mawbey had the command.

About three miles and a half from Dehra Dun was the little fortress of Kulunga, situated in a nook of the hills of Nalapani. It was something like a stone-henge—a small table-land surrounded by large blocks of stone which acted as the fort-wall,—which again was protected by a thick range of *sal* trees.

Finding the British force at his doors, Balabhadra Singh, nephew of Amar Singh, the Chief of Nahan, had taken refuge in this fortress of Nature with a few chosen followers, not exceeding three hundred. This was unbearable to Colonel Mawbey—the hill-fortress being within four miles of the great military station of Dehra Dun. Colonel Mawbey had reached Dehra Dun on the 24th. On that very night he had written to Balabhadra to surrender, and had received a proud reply of meeting him on the battle-field. Next morning, the active British General was marching up hill. He reached the base of the Nalāpani Hills, and fixed his battery there, but, when he saw that with all his efforts, he could make no impression upon the enemy, he sent news to Gillespie at Saharanpur, and the Major-General made his appearance on the scene the next day, the 26th October. In two or three days he completed his preparations for the siege. Four detachments under Colonel Carpenter, Captain Faust, Major Kelly and Captain Campbell, surrounded the place from foursides, and a regiment under Major Ludlow was kept in reserve.

The siege began. The discharge from the British battery was returned by volleys of musketry, which wrought immense havoc amongst the British forces. Though the British cannon did much harm amongst the brave three hundred, they showed no sign whatever of giving way. The determined manner in which the post was defended by a small number of men against tremendous odds, guided by the best generals of the age, created a mingled feeling of surprise and indignation in the minds of the besiegers. The leaders of the siege forgot themselves, and in attempting to scale the walls. Lieutenant Ellis and Major-General Gillespie lost their lives.\*

The command then devolved on Colonel Mawbey as the senior officer. He found that it would be rashness to proceed further in the siege, and that his prudent course would be to make a hasty retreat. This he did, and asked for re-inforcements and a battering train from Delhi. It took a month's time for the train to arrive, but, there was no help for it. The expected re-inforcements and battering train reaching him on the 24th November, a second attack was made the next day, and it was repulsed for a second time.

\* The death of general Gillespie was very tragic and associated with the cowardice of the British troops. H. H. Wilson writes :

"General Gillespie, irritated by the repulse which had been sustained, persisted in renewing the attempt, declaring aloud his determination to carry the fort or lose his life. Accordingly, he placed himself at the head of three fresh companies of the 53rd regiment and of the dragoons, and led them again towards the gate of the fort. *When within range of the enemy's matchlocks, the men of the 53rd sung back. The General in advance of the line, in vain called on them to follow him; and while waving his sword to encourage them to come on, he was shot through the heart, and immediately expired.*"

In a footnote, Wilson adds: "The men of this regiment were in a discontented and sullen mood, conceiving themselves to have been overworked by the necessary repetition of parade exercise.

Those Englishmen who say that they have acquired India by the sword and hold India by the sword, should remember the fact that it was not the sword of their co-religionists which secured India for them. In fact, in almost all Indian campaigns where there was any hard fighting, British soldiers showed great cowardice and pusillanimity. Compare their behavior at the siege of Bharatpur with that of the Indian Sepoys.

Meantime, the water-supply of the besieged had fallen short. The only supply was from the water-falls outside the fortress near the British encampment at Nalapani and this had virtually been cut off. In the midst of the shots which were rapidly decimating their numbers, the groans of the wounded, the cries of the women and children for water, the besieged had to defend their apology of a fort in which breeches had been made on all sides, from an overwhelming force, thirsting for their blood. They, however, did not mind the shots of the besiegers as the burning thirst which overcame them and all their dependants. From three hundred the number had been reduced to seventy. They might have then surrendered; and, their generous enemy filled with admiration at their noble conduct would have warmly accepted it. But the besieged heroes disdained to yield and admit defeat!

On the last day of the month, when batteries of the British troops were hurrying on their work, and volleys after volleys from the Gurkha musketry responded to them, there was a pause of a few minutes in the ranks of the besieged. Suddenly the iron gates were flung open, and out came the immortal seventy "with drawn swords in their hands, guns on their arms, the *kukri* or *bhujali* hanging from their belts, and the *chakra* or wheel resplendent on their head-dress, led by their chief, Balabhadra,—brave, erect, cheerful and his measured military gait," and before the astounded British force had time to reflect, they had cut right through the line, drank to their heart's content from the springs of Nalapani, and in no time disappeared without any one of them being hurt!

The English razed Kulunga to the ground. The English historian of Dehra Dun, R. C. Williams, B. A., C. S., thus remarks on the incident:

"Such was the conclusion of the defence of Kulunga,—a feat of arms worthy of the best of chivalry, conducted with a heroism almost sufficient to palliate the disgrace of our own reverses." And in the silent forests at Dehra Dun, on the banks of the river Riechpana, stands a small monument, "as a tribute of respect for our gallant adversary, Balabhadra Singh."

Another Indian gentleman, Babu Moti Lal Ghose, writes in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* for February 16 '1900:

We have read of Leonidas in Greek history. He has been immortalized by Greek historians. But he belongs to ancient history, besides, his exploits have been recorded by his own countrymen. But Balabhadra belongs to modern history, and it was his enemies who recorded his exploits. Leonidas opposed an ill-armed barbarian horde, but Balabhadra opposed a far better-armed and better-disciplined enemy. When he refused to surrender, General Gillespie was amazed at his audacity!

We have heard innumerable accounts of bravery and chivalry, but Balabhadra's feat will beat every one of them. The world cannot show one equal to it.

Capt. Vansittart refers to this heroism of Balabhadra in his book "Notes on Nepal." He says: "In this defence Balabhadra with his 600 Gurkhas repulsed two assaults, inflicting on the British division a loss of 31 officers including General Gillespie, who was killed in the first assault, and 718 men, killed, wounded and missing."

Mind, the Gurkhas were only 600 and badly armed and without any adequate cover. Mind, they were subjected to "incessant shelling for three days," as Capt. Vansittart says. Mind, they had no water to slake their thirst.

What followed was still more wonderful. "The survivors, 90 in number," says Captain Vansittart, "cut their way through our posts and escaped." And thus, these 90 heroes, with only *kukris* in their hands, cut a passage for themselves, through the British lines!

Says Captain Vansittart: "During the assaults in the fort, women were seen hurling stones and undauntedly exposing themselves, and several of their dead bodies were subsequently found amidst the ruins of the fort."

When the British entered the fort they "saw the evidence of the desperate courage and bloody resistance of these six hundred men opposed to means so overwhelming." "For, the whole area of the fort was a slaughter house, strewn with the bodies of the dead and wounded." Captain Vansittart continues to say: "The defence of this fort retarded a whole division for over a month." So, was not Balabhadra, as described by his opponents, greater than Leonidas? Yet Leonidas is known to every body, and Balabhadra to none!

But if they shewed courage, they also shewed the highest generosity. They never touched the dead bodies of the enemy or stripped any one of them. They were too high-minded to offer insult to the dead.

It was evident then that the British could not succeed in subduing the Gurkhas by means of the sword alone. It was found necessary to supplement the sword by fraud. Accordingly Colonel Mawbey, who had succeeded General Gillespie in the command, detached Lieut.-Colonel Carpenter to a position on the right bank of the Jumna in order to intrigue with the hill tribes, should any of them show a disposition to rise and throw off the Gurkha yoke. It is on record that

"The people of the Jounsar in consequence took up arms, and so much alarmed the Gurkha garrison of Barat, a stronghold in the mountains, that they hastily evacuated a fort which could not have been reduced without trouble and loss."\*

Notwithstanding these intrigues, the British again met with reverses and disasters, which did not reflect much credit on their generals and military officers.

Colonel Mawbey himself marched towards Nahan, the capital of the small state of Sirmor. The Raja of this state was dispossessed by the Gurkhas and so he entered into an intrigue with the British. To this circumstance, in all probability, should be attributed the fact of the Gurkhas evacuating this place and retiring to Jythak. Prinsep writes :

"Nahn . . . though upon a hill two thousand feet high, was not deemed by the enemy to be of sufficient strength for their main stand. Accordingly Runjoor Singh had received Umar Singh's orders to retire to a position north of the town, and to occupy the surrounding heights and the fort of Jythuk, situated at a point where two spurs of mountainous ridges meet, and the peak at the intersection rises to a height of three thousand six hundred feet above the level of the plains of Hindustan."†

At Jythak the Gurkhas were about two thousand strong, while their enemy had at least an equal number of men. Major-General Martindal having been appointed to succeed General Gillespie, took over the command of the division from Colonel Mawbey on the 20th December. Having ascertained the evacuation of Nahn, he caused it to be occupied by Major Ludlow on the 24th of December and on the following day proceeded with his whole force against Jythuk, which was defended by stockades at various heights.

The British succeeded in capturing the fort of Kulunga and dislodging Balabhadra with his men, women and children from it only when the water-supply of the besieged had fallen short. The lesson learnt from that campaign was not lost upon General Martindal. He directed his attention to the water-supply of the Jythuk garrison and he discovered

\* Mill and Wilson, VIII., p. 22.

† Loc. Cit. I., 95-96

that they depended for their supply of water upon wells situated at some distance below and exterior to the fort. Two detachments were formed to occupy different arms of the ridges as well as to cut off the water-supply of the garrison. Majors Richards and Ludlow were entrusted with the commands of these detachments.

Both these detachments met with defeats at the hands of the Gurkhas and had to retreat precipitately, leaving behind a very large number of officers and men among killed, wounded and prisoners. The English did not anticipate and were not prepared for the disaster. Professor H. H. Wilson writes:

"This repulse had a most mischievous effect upon the progress of the campaign, as General Martindal did not think himself competent to resume offensive measures until he was reinforced, and military operations in this quarter were consequently arrested."

Thus closed the year 1814 upon this division, which had to record nothing but a chapter of defeats, disasters and reverses.

Of all the commanders, General Ochterlony alone did not show that incompetency and want of self-reliance and coolness of head which characterised others. He alone distinguished himself in this war and but for him it is not too much to say that the British would not have succeeded in bringing the war to a successful termination. Ochterlony was the Resident at Delhi and had adopted some of the Eastern vices, such as the keeping of a harem and a number of concubines. By these means he learnt that art of intrigue of which he was a past master. It was this knowledge which gave him an advantage with other British generals and officers. He spread the net of intrigues and ensnared some of the feudatory chiefs under the Nepalese government and thus with their help succeeded in gaining his object.

Ochterlony was in charge of the most westernmost division of troops that penetrated the Nepalese frontier from the Satlaj, by a pass less difficult than most of those further east, and was opposed to Amar Singh in person. From the left bank of the Satlaj, there rises a succession of mountains, on three of whose ranges the Gurkhas had built the forts of Nalagarh, Ramgarh and Malam. Between and beyond these ranges were fertile valleys in possession of chiefs who were tributaries to the Nepal government. It was the interest of Ochterlony to intrigue with them and tempt them to betray their Suzerain, and he succeeded. One of them, the Raja of Hindur, very easily fell a victim to the machinations of the Christians. He became their ally and rendered them valuable services both by means of men and provisions.†

\* Mill and Wilson, VIII., p. 26.

† In a footnote Captain Cunningham in his History of the Sikhs, writes :

"During the war of 1814 Sir David Ochterlony sometimes almost despaired of success, and, amid his vexations, he once at least recorded his opinion that the sepoys of the Indian army were unequal to the mountain warfare as was being waged. . . . The most active and useful ally of the English during the war, was Raja Ramsurrun of Hindoor (or Nalagarh), the descendant of the Hurree Chand slain by Gooroo Govind, and who was himself the ready coadjutor of Sunsar Chund in many aggressions upon others, as well as in resistance to the Goorkhas. The venerable chief was still alive in 1846, and he continued to talk with admiration of Sir David Ochterlony and his 'eighteen pounders,' and to expatiate upon the aid he himself rendered in dragging them up the steep slopes of the Himalayas."

Ochterlony's division ascended the hills on the 31st of October and, resolving to put nothing to hazard, made a road with great labor, and sat himself down, with heavy guns, before Nalagarh on the 2nd of November. The garrisons of Nalagarh and Taragarh could not hold out against the superior force of their enemy, and so they were compelled to surrender on the 6th of November. There was, however, no cowardice on the part of the Gurkhas. What could these two garrisons, hardly five hundred strong, have done against 7,000 men?

At Ramgarh, Amar Singh had taken his post. It was against him that the General directed his attention. By all accounts, Amar Singh had not more than 3,000 troops under him, whereas he was opposed to at least 7,000 troops under British officers. After capturing Nalagarh and Taragarh, Ochterlony made one week's preparations before he proceeded on the 13th of November against Ramgarh.

Amar Singh was more than a match for General Ochterlony. It speaks volumes in favour of the military skill of this Gurkha general that with only 3,000 troops he not only kept the English general and his officers at bay, but inflicted heavy defeats on them. But in their hour of triumph, the Gurkhas did not fail to show that generosity to the vanquished, for which, the Hindus alone of all other nations of the earth are noted. Prinsep writes:

"The Goorkas gave permission to remove and bury the dead, a courtesy they never refused during the war and not the only one we experienced at their hands."

The checks and repulses did not cow down the heart of Ochterlony, although at at this time, according to Prinsep, he

"had serious doubts of our (British) ultimate success in the struggle, and he feared that our native army, with all its discipline, would be found ill-adapted to warfare in a country too rugged to admit of its superior tactics being brought to play. These apprehensions were, however, expressed to none but his commander-in-chief."

The Commander-in-Chief at this time was the Governor-General himself. As soon as he heard of the critical state of affairs, he determined to send reinforcements to General Ochterlony. It cannot be denied that Lord Hastings had not anticipated these disasters and reverses.

But before the arrival of the expected reinforcements, Ochterlony was deep in intrigues with the neighbouring chiefs.\* He succeeded in winning over the Raja of Hindur,

In another place of his work, the same author pays the following tribute to his memory: "Sir David Ochterlony will long live in the memory of the people of Northern India as one of the greatest of the conquering English chiefs, and he was the very last of the British leaders who endeared himself, both to the army which followed him and to the princes who bowed before the colossal power of his race."

\* See J. C. Powell-Price's paper on "The operations leading to the Capture of Almora in 1815" in *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. IV, part I, pp. 101-110. Madras 1926. He writes: "It will be remembered that during the eighteenth century there had been considerable internal differences among the Kumaonis culminating in the invasion and conquest of the country by the Gurkhas.

"The latter's rule was very harsh and was much resented by the people, so much so indeed that the phrase 'Gurkha Raj' has become proverbial for oppression. This is important, as it explains the ease with which long lines of communication were held by the British during the operation.



whom he got to lend his exertions in making a road for artillery from Mukram, by Khundnee to Nahur, where he had for some time fixed his head-quarters.

He also intrigued with the Raja of Bilaspur and brought him also over to his side. Prinsep writes :

"This Raja, though connected with Umar Singh's family by a recent marriage, was induced at last, through fear of seeing his capital and country given over to another, to make his terms and submit."

Thus the Christian general had not only more than twice the number of troops than his Hindu opponent, but he succeeded in raising traitors in his opponents' camp, whom he tempted to betray their suzerain. But notwithstanding the possession of all these advantages, General Ochterlony had to remain idle during the winter months and made little progress towards accomplishing the object of the campaign before the beginning of the next April.

Prinsep is compelled to pay a tribute of praise to the military skill of Amar Singh in the following words :

"Umar Singh had fully justified the reputation he enjoyed as a soldier by the manner in which he met, and sometimes defeated, the sagacious plans of the British commander. Nothing decisive, indeed, had yet been done by either army : but, considering that the British had been reinforced to near seven thousand men, while Umar Singh had never more than two thousand eight hundred or at the most three thousand, this was the best possible proof of the skill with which he had availed himself of the advantage of ground, which was all he had to compensate for his numerical inferiority."

The other divisions which had assembled at Gorakhpur and Behar for the purpose of penetrating the Nepalese frontier from the east, also met with defeats and reverses, and some of the British generals showed such incompetency and cowardice that there was no other alternative left for the Governor-General than that of their removal from their respective commands. It is not necessary to minutely refer to the operations of these divisions or the defeats and reverses they sustained at the hands of their Hindu adversaries. Suffice it to say that such disasters had been almost unparalleled in the history of British India and every nerve was strained to increase the strength of all divisions so as to bring the war to a successful termination as soon as possible:

Regarding the critical state of affairs of the British, Prinsep writes :

"General Ochterlony alone had not been foiled. He was steadily pursuing his plan by slow and secure manoeuvres, but had yet gained no brilliant advantage over his equally cautious antagonist. General Martindal's division had failed there several times, twice before Nalapanee, and the third time in the attempt to take up positions before Jythuk. Moreover, the aggregate loss sustained by his division had amounted to a third of the number that originally took the field from Meeruth. The army assembled at Gourukpoor had allowed itself to retire before the enemy under circumstances amounting to a repulse; while, as we have seen, the Behar division, which was thought strong enough to have penetrated to Katmandoo, had lost two detachments of five hundred men each,

"In other theatres of the war the British troops had met with little success. The generals were, with a few exceptions, incompetent. In the Eastern theatre Major-Generals Marley and Wood had done nothing and the latter had actually deserted his troops in the field. General Gillespie had been killed near Dehra Dun, while General Ochterlony was held up further West."

without an equivalent success of any kind. From the frontier of Oudh to Rungpoor, our armies were completely held in check on the outside of the forest : while our territory was insulted with impunity and the most extravagant alarms spread through the country."

Notwithstanding all the advantages which the Gurkhas gained over the British, during the course of this war, they were obliged to act on the defensive and were unable to execute any offensive operations on account of their numerical inferiority and lack of that tact and knowledge to intrigue with and corrupt the officers and men under the British, as well as, it may be added, want of money, which is essentially necessary for carrying on offensive measures to any very large extent.

When the English found, to their cost, that they could not succeed by fair means, in bringing the war to a successful termination, they did not scruple to intrigue with the chiefs and men who were subject to the Nepalese Government and tempted them to throw off their allegiance to and betray their suzerain. Of course, it is a motto of the British that in love and war everything is justifiable, and so they did not stop to consider whether they were acting on that prayer which they were taught to offer to God everyday by Him whom they call their Saviour, "Father, lead us not into temptations, but deliver us from all evils." How Ochterlony intrigued with the Rajas of Hindur and Bilaspur has been already mentioned. Intrigues on a larger scale took place with the chiefs on the eastern boundary and centre of the Nepalese territories.

H. H. Wilson\* writes :

"While the two divisions in Gorakhpur and Saran disappointed the calculations upon which they had been organised, the smaller body under Major Latter, in the same direction, had surpassed expectation and accomplished more than it was destined to attempt. Not only had the boundary east of the Kusi river been protected from insult but the Gurkhas had been driven from all their positions ; occupation had been taken of the province of Morang, and an alliance had been formed with a hill chief, the Raja of Sikim, a small state east of Nepal, *which, ... gave the British a useful confederate, and additional means of acting upon the resources of the enemy.*

"Another element in the plan of the campaign, intended to take but a subordinate and contingent share, was equally attended with success, and was productive of highly important consequences. The province of Kumaon, forming the central part of the Gurkha conquests, was under the authority of a chief, Chautra Bam Sah, who was known to be disaffected to the ruling dynasty of Nepal : while the people of Kumaon, and the adjacent province of Garhwal, who had been subject to the Raja of Srinagar, but had been alienated by his tyrannical conduct and had consequently facilitated the Gurkha invasion, were now as hostile to their new and not less oppressive rulers, *and were anxious to transfer their allegiance to the British. No serious obstacles were thought likely, therefore, to impede the British possession of the country,* and its occupation was strongly recommended by its central situation."

Of course Wilson uses the language of occidental diplomacy, but the sentences which have been put in italics in the above clearly show the nature of the intrigues in which the English indulged. So the Governor-General determined to penetrate the Nepalese territory through Kumaon. The task of intriguing with the natives of that province was ably performed by Colonel Gardner. This British officer was one of those

military adventurers who flocked to the courts of the Indian princes towards the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. He entered Holkar's service in 1798, but a disagreement arose between him and his master and Gardner left him. The cause of the disagreement seems to have been the suspicion of treachery entertained by Holkar against Gardner, which was not altogether unfounded when we take into consideration the fact of his subsequently serving under the British Government and fighting against Holkar.

Gardner was a past master in the art of intrigue. He married an Indian lady of the Muhammadan persuasion and according to the rites of Islam. Thus his position in India was very critical and he had to indulge in intrigues in self-defence.

Having thus distinguished himself in the art of intrigue, he was chosen a tool for intriguing with the people of Kumaon by Lord Hastings. And, as said before, Gardner succeeded in his task.

It was some time before the Governor-General succeeded in assembling an army on the Kumaon frontier. The Nepalese Government had a frontier of over 600 miles to guard and, as mentioned before, they could not muster more than 12,000 men. The region of Kumaon, it would seem, was altogether neglected by the Gurkha government, for they never expected the British invasion of their territories from that quarter. It was this weak spot in the strategical situation of the Gurkhas which proved a source of strength to the English, who, however, would not have succeeded against the Gurkhas but for their underhand dealings and low intrigues.

Colonel Gardner having paved the way, a large force under Colonel Nicholls was despatched in April, 1815, to Kumaon, and, without much bloodshed, the provinces of Kumaon and Garhwal were taken possession of by the British. This was almost a foregone conclusion, because the loyalty and fidelity of the natives of those provinces to their rightful suzerain had been tampered with by the British, who resorted more to intrigue and fraud than to force in gaining their object.

The dismemberment of the fertile provinces of Kumaon and Garhwal by the British was the most severe blow suffered by the government of Nepal. The prestige of the British was retrieved and, had they been desirous of concluding peace with the Nepalese, there is every reason to believe that the latter would have, considering how traitors had been raised in their own camp, submitted to terms favourable to the British Government. But Lord Hastings was not in a mood for peace, he was desirous of wiping out the independent existence of the principality of Nepal. With this object in view, he increased the strength of all the divisions that were sent to operate against the Gurkhas.

The Gurkhas were not savages, they had some thing to teach in the art of warfare to the ever boastful natives of England. It was only when the English learnt the Gurkha method of warfare that the latter found themselves outmatched, not so much by the military tactics of their opponents as by their fraud and long purse. Prinsep\* writes:

"It must be allowed to the Gurkhas that they were an experienced as well as a brave enemy: they had been continually waging war in the mountains for more than fifty years, and knew well

\* Vol. I, p. 186.

how to turn every thing to the best advantage. Caution and judgment were, therefore, more required against them, than boldness of action or of decision, . . . ."

"It will be perceived that little advance was made in the campaign until we had learnt to turn the same advantages to account against the enemy, by the help of which he foiled us so often at the commencement, for *with all the Indian warfare, combined with the professional science of Europe, our officers found get something to learn from these Goorkhas. We adopted from them the plan of stockading posts, which the nature of the campaign frequently rendered it necessary to place beyond the limit of prompt support. . . .*

Sir David Ochterlony has the merit of having first resorted to this plan. . . .

"The strength of the stockades was originally greatly miscalculated; made up of rough hewn wood and stones, heaped together between an inner and outer palisade, they were in appearance so contemptible as to invite assault without even seeming to require breaching . . . . The lighter artillery made little or no impression, and the difficulty of bringing up heavy guns, rendered them in truth, most formidable defences. The wood and materials for raising them were everywhere at hand, and the celerity with which they could be prepared in any position formed a main source of the strength of the country. *But this was a resource equally available to an invader, and one which placed the issue in the power of continuance, that is, in the length of the purse.*"

The sentences put in italics in the above extract clearly show the advantages which the English possessed over the Gurkhas in adopting the military tactics of the latter principally owing to the length of their purse. It does not require much intelligence to understand the causes which principally contributed to the success of the British over the Gurkhas. The latter could not boast of such a long purse as their enemy and, moreover, they were numerically inferior to him. Add to these, the wonderful capacity which the British possessed for intrigues and conspiracies and for raising traitors by holding out temptations and specious promises in the camp of their opponents, and no wonder need be expressed at their final triumph over the Gurkhas.

There is no necessity here to enter into details regarding all the battles fought before the first campaign against the Gurkhas was brought to an end. Suffice it to say that the result of the campaign was highly favourable to the British—a result which surpassed all their sanguine expectations and anticipations. What these were, will be related in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XLVIII

### THE NEPAL WAR.

#### THE SECOND CAMPAIGN.

It has been said that, had the Governor-General of India been bent upon peace, there would have been no difficulty in its accomplishment, for the Nepalese Government had been fully convinced of the uselessness of any struggle with an enemy whom they were unable to subdue. The sovereign of Nepal had sent his family priest, Guru Gujraj Misar, to the camp of the British political agent, Major Bradshaw, to sue for peace. Had generosity towards a fallen foe formed any part in the creed of the British, they would have succeeded in concluding peace without the loss of any more blood or treasure. But the Britishers who ruled India never displayed any generous feelings towards their fallen enemies. It was, therefore, too much to expect that Marquess Hastings would have easily acceded to the overture for peace made by the Nepalese. He demanded the following sacrifices from them:

1st. The perpetual cession of all the hill country taken in the campaign, *viz.*, from the Kalee westward.

2nd. A like cession of the entire Terai, from the foot of the outer hills along the whole line of the remaining territory of the Gurkhas.

3rd. The relinquishment by the Gurkhas of the footing they had gained in the territory of the Sikkim Raja and the surrender to that chief of the stockaded forts of Nagree and Naparkot.

4th. The reception of a Resident, with the usual escort and establishment, at Katmandoo, and the customary stipulation not to receive or give service to Europeans without the special sanction of Government.

Like Shylock, the Marquess Hastings demanded from the Raja of Nepal the above sacrifices to the full. In vain did the Nepal Government ask the Governor-General to reconsider and modify his demands. Marquess Hastings knew fully well that his demands could not be acceded to by the proud Gurkhas without further fighting. It was just what he himself anticipated and desired, and therefore he kept the army in a state of equipment ready to take the field immediately on the return of the favourable season.

That astute Gurkha General, Amar Singh, with rare political sagacity and foresight rightly warned the Government of his country not to conclude peace with the British without further resistance. In March 1815 when he himself was besieged by the British Generals, he wrote a letter to the Court at Katmandu which was intercepted by the English. If this letter is not a forgery, it exacts admiration for the Gurkha General, for his having fully understood the nature of the enemy of his country. The points dwelt upon in this letter have been thus summarized by Prinsep :\*

"Firstly. That a treaty concluded after defeat could not be trusted to, as the British knowing the terms to be conceded through fear, would presume upon the weakness of the nation, and seek new causes of quarrel, until its absolute subjugation was effected.

"Secondly. That the constitution of the Gurkha power, which held several subordinate Rajas and nations in subjection, would afford the British numberless occasions of interference, and that they would thus by intrigue, during peace, effectually weaken and undermine the dominion established.

Thirdly. The danger of allowing a Resident to be permanently fixed at Katmandoo, is particularly dwelt upon as likely to lead to the introduction of a subsidiary force, and to prove a preliminary step to absolute subjection.

"Fourthly. The advantage of manful resistance as, opposed to concession and submissiveness, is strongly urged, from the prosperity enjoyed by the Bhurtpoor Raja since his successful defence of that fortress, contrasted with the utter ruin by which Tippoo Sultan was overtaken, after the concessions made by him to effect the peace signed by Lord Cornwallis in 1790."

It cannot be denied that this Gurkha warrior had properly judged the character of the assailants of his country. If the British Government of India were not inclined to conclude peace, the Nepalese also were not overanxious to accept the humiliating terms offered to them, by their enemy. The recurrence of hostilities was therefore inevitable, and so in the beginning of the year 1816, the second campaign of the Nepal War commenced. This campaign was of short duration, for it was not possible for a small power like that of Nepal to carry on hostilities with their wealthy and unscrupulous opponents. By the beginning of March 1816, the Nepal War came to an end and a treaty was concluded on terms very advantageous to the British. Although Nepal was not annexed, yet the Gurkhas were crushed never to rise again. As a result of the Nepal War, Prinsep,\* has truly observed that

"Its effect has been to shut out the Nepalese from any ambitious views of aggrandizement to the east, and to circumscribe their territory on three sides by the British power, while on the fourth, the stupendous range of the Himalaya, and the Chinese frontier, present an effectual barrier. Thus, while the British and Chinese empires continue in their present strength, the hope of extending their dominion must be extinguished, and the military spirit, which was fostered by the series of victories gained over the surrounding Rajas, must die away for want of employment."

Not only were the Gurkhas crushed as a military nation, but since the establishment of a British resident at the Court of Nepal,

"The records of Nepal furnish little of interest, except a history of intestinal struggles for power between the Thapa and Panre factions, and futile attempts at forming combinations with other states in Hindustan against the British."†

It also seems probable that the Marquess of Hastings was anxious to go to war with Nepal, because he knew that by defeating the Nepalese, the British would become masters of the pleasant Himalayan heights and valleys which in time they could settle and colonize. H. H. Wilson writes:

"Under a climate more congenial to European organisation than the sultry plains of India, and with space through which they may freely spread, the descendants of a northern race may be able to aggregate and multiply, and if British colonies be ever formed in the east, with a chance of

\* Vol. I. p. 207.

† Wright's History of Nepal, p. 54.

preserving the moral and physical energies of the parent country, it is to the vales and mountains of the Indian Alps that we must look for their existence,—it will be to the Gurkha war that they will trace their origin.”

### Appendix to Chapter XLVIII.

The Nepal War has formed the subject of study of several British military officers. Thus the articles of Colonel W. G. Hamilton, D. S. O., in the *United Service Journal* for July 1903 and April 1912, and that of Colonel L. W. Shakespeare, in the same journal for October 1912, deserve special mention. These officers have given the authorities whom they have consulted in preparing their contributions. Colonel Hamilton specially relied on “Papers respecting the Nepal War printed in conformity to the resolution of the Court of Proprietors of the East India stock, of the 3rd March 1824.” These papers “form a valuable mine of information on the subject.”

Colonel Shakespeare relied on the following books, *viz.*,

*Life of Rollo Gillespie* ,

*Memoirs of Gillespie*, by Egerton and Thorne ,

*Military History of the Nepal War* ;

*Narrative of Nepal*, by Capt. T. H. Smith, P. A. in Nepal, 1841 ;

Records, 53rd foot.

Colonel Hamilton attributes the British success in the war to Ochterlony, “whose fame rests mainly on his outstanding qualities as a commander and leader of men in the Nepal War,” and to one “Dr. Rutherford, who provided the best and most accurate information regarding the Gurkha army, its leaders, organisation and fighting value, and the topography of Kumaon and Gurhwal.” He was the trade agent for the Company and civil surgeon at Moradabad. He employed “Pandits, Gurkhali soldiers and others, as paid spies.” So “his services in the Kumaon campaign were invaluable, but his equal does not appear to have been found elsewhere, while his sound advice and opinions expressed before the war do not appear to have carried the conviction they deserved.”

“Ochterlony brought himself into touch with native life in a way which, though not uncommon a hundred years ago, hardly commends itself to the moral sense of more recent days. In private life he dressed and lived as a native of India, while a harem (the inmates of which were not always affectionately subservient) formed part of his domestic establishment.”

Colonel Shakespeare pays a tribute to the gallant Gurkha soldiers in the following terms :

“Unlike other Asiatic enemies the Nepalese showed a remarkable spirit of courtesy towards us, worthy of a more enlightened people. The cases of poisoned wells or arrows, or cruelty to wounded, are only recorded in one or two cases, no rancorous spirit of revenge appeared to animate them, they fought in fair conflict like men, and abstained from insulting the bodies of dead or wounded. In no case was there any interference with the dismal duty of collecting the casualties at the close of an action.”

The British officers and men did not receive any medals for taking part in the war with Nepal. The same officer writes:

"It is curious to note that this war, which lasted in its first phase from October 1814 to May 1815, and in its second phase from January 1816 to May that year, was full of hard fighting, losses, and hard work, produced no medals, nor is it inscribed on the war honours of the numbers of regiments, English and Native, who took part in it. How different to the lavish distribution of such in our day,"

The first hill war in India should have been more handsomely commemorated than it evidently was by the Company's Government of that period.

Regarding the wisdom of Amar Singh Thapa, Colonel Shakespeare writes :

"It is also worthy of note that Amar-Singh's policy of keeping out the English at all costs from Nepal, so gravely impressed by him on the Durbar then, is still kept up, and who shall say that he was not wise?"



## CHAPTER XLIX

### TREATY WITH CUTCH

Lord Hastings extended the British influence in the Bombay Presidency by concluding a treaty with Cutch and thus bringing it under the protection of the East India Company. Cutch is a small principality ruled by Jareja Rajputs and as it is bounded on the North by Sindh and on the East and South by Kathiawad, the language there spoken is a mixture of Sindhi and Gajarati, and having the Arabian Sea on the West, its inhabitants are a daring maritime people. During the war in Nepal, free-booters from this principality raided some parts of Kathiawad, which at that time owed allegiance to the Peshwa and the Gaekwar, who were in alliance with the British, to whom it thus served as a pretext to despatch a force under Colonel East to Cutch, who without difficulty captured the fortress of Anjar. Soon afterwards, in 1816, a treaty was entered into with the ruling prince, by which Cutch became a feudatory state. It was thus that the Company's frontier was advanced to the mouths of the Indus.

The ruling prince of Cutch, it would seem, very readily entered into an alliance with the English, because, otherwise the latter would have helped the Amirs of Sindh, who it was said, contemplated the conquest of Cutch, and for this object they solicited the aid of the English when the mission was sent to them by Lord Minto in 1809.

## CHAPTER L

### THE PINDARI WAR

The taste of blood whetted the appetite for more. The Nepal War, however iniquitous in its origin, ended in a manner highly advantageous to the British Government of India. They became masters of territories several hundreds of miles in extent, and of revenues estimated at 7 or 8 figures in lakhs of rupees per annum. Emboldened by the success in the war with Nepal, coffers of state well replenished with loot and indemnity moneys, Lord Hastings did not let the grass grow under his feet before he was seen preparing for war on a scale unprecedented in the annals of British India. He tried his best to make the population of India believe that all his preparations were meant to crush the Pindaris; but no prophet was necessary to come and tell them the real motives which actuated the Governor-General in undertaking the projected war.

That the Pindaris\* were a sort of unpaid militia or reservists will be evident from the following passage extracted from Malcolm's Report on Central India.†

"During the time of Mulhar Row and Tukajee Holkar, the Pindarries, who always encamped separately, had, when within the Maratha territories and not permitted to plunder, an allowance which averaged four annas, or a quarter of a rupee, a day, and the further supported themselves by employing their small horses and bullocks in carrying grain, forage and wood, for which articles the Pindarry bazar was the great mart. When let loose to pillage, which was always the case some days before the army entered an enemy's country, all allowances stopped."

It is clear then that the Pindaris were not robbers or freebooters, but they formed the militia, reservists or auxiliaries of the regular Maratha forces in the time of their taking the field. If we remember this fact, we shall be in a position to know their true character and why the Maratha princes were so unwilling to withdraw their patronage from them.

Before we proceed to describe the war which brought about their annihilation, it is necessary to trace the rise and progress of the Pindaris.

No satisfactory etymology\*\* has been traced of the term Pindari. Malcolm writes that "The most popular one among the natives is that they derived it from their dissolute habits, leading them constantly to resort to the shops of the sellers of an intoxicated drink termed Pinda." (*Ibid.*, p. 499, f. n.)

In the history of northern India, there is no mention of the Pindaris, but in the history of the Deccan we read that in the latter part of the reign of Aurangzeb, that is about 1689, a Pindari named Poonapah is mentioned as an auxiliary of the Marathas. But when the Maratha Empire was in the zenith of its power, or when anarchy had not broken out in the territories which owed allegiance to the rule of the Marathas,

\* See Origin of the Pindaris—Allahabad reprint.

† Vol. I, p. 496 of 2nd Edition.

\*\* Messrs. Yule and Burnell have inserted a long dissertation on the term *Pindary* in their *Hobson-Jobson* (New edition, edited by William Crook. London 1908. pp. 711—713).

the Pindaris had not gained that name for ferocity and perpetration of cruelties with which their character is represented by English writers. It was in Central India that their existence attracted the notice of the Government of India and measures were concerted to encompass their ruin. It will, therefore, be necessary to narrate their history since their first settlement in that part of India.

The leaders of the Pindaris were mostly Afghans by nationality and military adventurers by profession. There was no lack of these Pathan adventurers in the army of Shivaji. One of them named Nasru, was a Jamadar under him. His son Chekun also filled the same station and was the father of Ghaziuddin, who may be described as the progenitor of the race of Pindaris of Central India. The Peshwa Baji Rao the first tried to extend the boundaries of the Maratha kingdom by attacking Malwa, which till then had formed part of the Mughal Empire of Delhi. Ghaziuddin was in the service of this Maratha leader and died when employed with a detachment at Ujjain. Of his two sons, Gurdi Khan and Shah Baz Khan, the former was taken in the service of Mulhar Rao Holkar, and accompanied him on his expedition to Hindustan. His duty was to harass the enemy and lay waste his country. Mulhar Rao Holkar was so pleased with the manner in which he performed his duty that he presented him with a Zere or golden flag which was the means of attracting many other freebooters and Pathans, and thus Gardi Khan increased his followers. On his death, he was succeeded in the leadership of the Pindaris by his son Lal Mohamad, who left it to his son Imam Baksh. But the latter was not a capable leader and was therefore superseded by one named Kadar Baksh. Besides him, there were two other Pindaris of note, named Tuku and Bahadur Khan, attached to the family of Holkar when the Pindari war broke out. These Pindaris were known as Holkar Shahi or adherents of Holkar.

The other Maratha prince of Central India—Sindhia—was not without his Pindari adherents. It has been mentioned above that of the two sons of Ghaziuddeen Gardi Khan was taken in the service of Mulhar Rao Holkar. The second son, Shah Baz Khan, entered the service of Ranoji Sindhia and followed his fortunes. He was killed in an action at Tonk. His two sons—Hira and Burran—were distinguished Pindari leaders in the army of Madhoji Sindhia. Hira was succeeded on his death in the command of the Pindaris by his two sons Dost Mahomad and Wasil Mahomad. It was Wasil Mahomad whose incursion into the British territories served as a pretext for the Government of India to go to war with the Pindaris.

Burran's son Dadar Baksh did not succeed to any authority. But one Dubla Jamadar became leader of the Pindaris who were, under the command of Burran. Rajun became the nominal head of the Pindaris on the death of his father Dubla Jamadar, but it was Chitu, whom the latter had adopted as his son, who became their leader. The origin and early history of Chitu are involved in obscurity. He is said to have been a native of Mewat in Rajputana, a Jat by birth. He was purchased during a famine and then afterwards adopted by Dubla Jamadar, as mentioned above. He was an able man, and on the death of Dubla Jamadar, succeeded to his command and was honored with the title of Nawab by Dowlat Rao Sindhia and granted a Jagir.

Another well-known Pindari leader in the service of Dowlat Rao Sindhia was Karim Khan. He was a Pathan by birth, was equally with Chitu honored with the title of Nawab and granted a Jagir by Dowlat Rao Sindhia.

Thus it will be seen that Dowlat Rao possessed a larger number of Pindari adherents than Holkar, in whose service, except Amir Khan, there was no other Pindari leader of note.

The Pindaris, as said so often before, formed the auxiliary forces of the Maratha Chiefs of Central India and after the Second Maratha War their services were requisitioned because the policy adopted by Sir George Barlow towards the princes of India was one calculated to make them go to war with one another and cut each other's throat. It was more in self-defence than in any thing else that the Maratha princes had to entertain the Pindaris as irregular forces. But it would be a mistake to suppose that the entertainment of the Pindaris was a new institution and, therefore, it could be done away with at a moment's notice from the British Government. The Pindaris had been in existence for a century and more and served very useful purposes in the military organization of the Marathas. Their annihilation was demanded, because they are said to have committed ravages in the districts under the government of the British. Let us see how far this is borne out by facts.

That for a long time the Pindaris respected the persons and properties of the British and their subjects is a fact which no one can deny. Grant Duff's testimony to this may be mentioned. Amir Khan, a well-known freebooter, was patronized and encouraged by the British to commit all sorts of excesses.

The Pindaris are said to have twice given trouble to the British Government of India—once in 1808-9, when they entered Guzerat, and again in 1812, when they devastated Mirzapur and Shahabad. But on these two occasions no step seems to have been taken by the English Government to punish them and it seems to us that the Pindaris also did not mean to come to blows with the British Government. They might have imitated the dacoits and thus entered the British territories. But they did not seem to have committed much mischief. It was not until they were provoked to do so by the British themselves that any Pindari horde committed those ravages in British Districts which were proclaimed to the world as a pretext for the British to go to war with them. It was in October 1815 that a party of Pindaris was first attacked by Major Fraser, who was in command of the Nizam's reformed Infantry and was accompanied by about a hundred horse.

It is said that the Pindaries had meditated an attack on the Southern Provinces of British India and therefore it was only expedient on the part of the British Indian Government to have ordered Major Fraser to attack them. It is difficult to say what were the intentions of the Pindaris, but there can be no doubt that the latter were now provoked to attack the British territories. The party of the Pindaris routed by Major Fraser proceeded to the banks of the Krishna river, committing depredations all along the route.

The Pindaris knew that the British Government were bent on their destruction and, therefore, committed all sorts of depredations in the territories of the British and of their

ally, the Nizam. Some of the places in the Madras Presidency were plundered by them and the amount of the loot is said to have been so considerable that merchants from Ujjain were sent for to purchase many of the valuables obtained.

But we must not place much credence on what the British writers say as to the cruelties and ravages committed by the Pindaris on men, women and children of the British territories. That the Pindaris were not demons but men with humane feelings and generous impulses may be gathered from the following incident casually mentioned by Malcolm in his celebrated report on Central India :

"It is a remarkable fact," writes Sir John Malcolm, "and one of the few creditable to the late community of the Pindaries that among the numerous prisoners of all ages and sexes whom they took, though they employed them as servants, gave them to their chiefs and accepted ransoms for them from their relations, they never sold them into bondage, nor carried on like the Brinjarries, a traffic in slaves.

If they could have been so humane and generous to their prisoners, it is difficult to believe all the cruelties and acts of savagery which have been laid at their door by British writers of Indian history. Of course, the Government of India were making a case against the Pindaris, in order to justify their waging the war, and, as such being the case, we should make allowances for all the statements of the English charging the Pindaris with atrocities and cruelties.

The real motive which actuated the British Indian Government to destroy the Pindaris is mentioned by Prinsep, who, in his *History of the Political and Military Transactions in India during the administration of the Marquess of Hastings*, thus writes on the subject :

"Their actual condition at the period (1814), entitled them to be regarded as a distinct political interest of the day, requiring an equal exertion of vigilance and circumspection as Hyder in the height of his power and inveterate animosity. These materials form the groundwork of an interest formidable at least to our repose, if not to our safety : and its central situation in India, nearly equidistant from the dominions of the three presidencies, imposed the necessity of the most extensive annual precautions of defence, in spite of which the territories of our allies were continually overrun."\*

The same author also observes that the entertainment of the Pindaris might have made the Maratha princes strong, which was, of course, not desirable for the British power in India.

"It is by no means improbable," writes Prinsep, "that the Mahratta states viewed the increase of the Pindaries with an eye to eventual service from their arms, for they avowedly attributed the disasters of the operations of 1803 to their having imitated the European mode of warfare, and affected to believe, that had they adhered to the Parthian method of their ancestors, the results of the contest would have been very different."†

But, as said so often before, the Pindaris formed a sort of auxiliary force in the military organization of the Maratha princes and it was not easy for them to destroy the Pindaris within a moment's notice from the Government of India. The increase in the number of the Pindaris is to be attributed to the anarchy and disorder which

\* Vol. I, pp. 33—34.

† *Ibid.*, p. 32.

reigned supreme in the native states of India, as a result of Barlow's policy towards them. That administrator considered that the safety of British rule in India consisted in making the native states wage war against each other and fight amongst themselves. It was then this Machiavellian policy of Barlow to which must be attributed the increase in the number of the Pindaris : for it was in self-defence that the Maratha princes had to entertain their services.

But no greater mistake could be committed than that into which Prinsep has fallen in attributing the plundering expedition of the Pindaris in the British territories to the instigation of the Maratha Princes. The above-named author writes :

"It was an insidious kind of hostility, thus under the mask of friendship and professions of attachment, to instigate the attacks of these irresponsible, unacknowledged bands ; but it is not on that account the less likely to have been suggested by the hatred and fears of the Mahratta chiefs, or recommended by their notions of morality."\*

Now, this is all gratuitous presumption on the part of the writer, for which there is not a tittle of evidence. The arguments adduced in support of the above presumption may be better stated in his own words :

It would seem that the Pindari leaders had this season (1815) come to a resolution to respect the territories of the Mahratta chiefs, and to direct their ravages chiefly, if not exclusively, against those of the Nizam and of the British Government. This had been publicly given out in the hordes : and some of the few stragglers that were left behind and taken, stated the same thing on their examinations. Such a resolution may have been the result of the secret negotiations carried on by the Mahratta agents, particularly Balajee Koonjur, a person of high repute and formerly a minister of the Peshwa. This man, having left Poona some years before in apparent disgrace, had latterly visited all the Mahratta Courts, where he was received with marked attention, and evidently had some important business in hand. He was known to have had communication with the Pindaries, on his way to Nagpoor from Sindhia's camp, in the early part of 1815, and from that city he went to Cheetoo's cantonment at Nemawar, as if purposely to make them a party to the intrigue he was conducting."†

The evidence of Balaji Kunjar's having instigated the Pindaris is not only very meagre but totally unreliable. The reasons for the incursion of the Pindaris into the British territories have been already mentioned before. There was enough provocation for the course which they adopted and it seems that they acted in self-defence.

The statement of "the few stragglers," even if true, which we doubt, cannot amount to much.

Again, it was the Pindari adherents of Sindhia who are said to have committed depredations in the British territories. Hence it follows that the British should have asked Sindhia to punish his Pindaris. But this they did not do. Moreover, if it was their object to crush those Pindaris who had committed ravages in their territories and were known to have been professed adherents of the House of Sindhia, the British should have invaded the territories of Sindhia alone in order to crush his Pindaris. But their warlike preparations were out of all proportion to the object against which they were directed. The Pindaris of the day were robbers, and so were the dacoits.

\* *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 334.

† *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 334.

The one had their headquarters in the native states, the other in British territories. No warlike preparations on any large scale were undertaken against the dacoits, as they were against the Pindaris. Hence it follows that in proclaiming the war against the Pindaris the British had some ulterior object in view.

Prinsep writes further on :

"If any proof were wanting, that these enterprises of the Pindaries were undertaken in concert with the Mahratta power, it might be found in the circumstance of the latter having afterwards chosen the particular moment of our prosecuting measures for the suppression of the predatory associations, to rise themselves against the British supremacy. Without some assurance of such support, whenever our strength should be put forth against them, the Pindary leaders would scarcely have commenced, at this particular juncture, a plan of systematic depredation, pointedly aimed at the only power they had reason to fear."\*

The analysis of the involved reasonings contained in the above sentences yields the following :

1. The Maratha powers were in league with the Pindaris, otherwise they would not have risen against the British when the latter proclaimed the Pindari War.
2. The Pindaris expected support from the Maratha powers, therefore they commenced their plan of systematic depredations in the British territories at a time when the British were making preparations for the war against the Pindaris

The above reasonings of Prinsep carry their own refutation with them. The Pindaris might or might not have expected help from the Maratha princes. But they had received provocation from the British and, moreover, they had good reasons to believe that the latter meditated their destruction. Under these circumstances it was but natural for them to have taken the course they adopted, and overrun the British territories.

The Maratha princes were not taken into the confidence of the British and were not consulted as to the measures which the latter had contemplated for the destruction of the Pindaris. They were alarmed at the warlike preparations and were justified in believing that the British meant to wage war against them. In self-defence they rose against the British. That they had good grounds for this will be narrated in the following pages.

## CHAPTER LI.

### THE PINDARI WAR (*Continued.*)

In his *Private Journal*, dated February 1, 1814, the Marquess of Hastings wrote :

"To us the Pindarries are no eventual resource, for a stipulation in their engagement is invariably an unlimited right of plunder, an atrocity to which no extremity could make us give countenance."

In a previous chapter, it has been shown that it was the policy of the East India Company's Government in India to encourage the Pindaris—nay to engage them for creating disturbances in the territories of those princes who were not on friendly terms with them.

But the Marquess of Hastings found that it did not pay the Company to avail themselves of the services of the Pindaris. Hence he wrote in his diary what has been quoted above.

In proclaiming the war against the Pindaris, the British Government, as said before, had ulterior designs. Lord Wellesley and his successor had to hurriedly conclude treaties with the Maratha princes, because it was impossible to any longer prosecute the war against them with advantage. True it is that Lord Lake chased Jaswunt Rao Holkar, but the power of that Maratha prince was not crushed. In fact in most of the early battles with him, the British came off second best. Again, the siege of Bharatpur hardly redounded to the credit of the British army. The failure of the British in all these expeditions must be attributed to a certain extent to their want of knowledge of Central India. The topography of that portion of India being unknown to the British, it was not possible for them to carry on military operations with success. Central India was to a great extent a *terra incognita* to them; hence they were obliged to cease from war.

But at the time when the Marquess of Hastings assumed the Governor-Generalship of India, a great change had come over the aspect of affairs. It is questionable if he would have undertaken the task of annihilating the Pindaris, had he not come to possess a thorough knowledge of the country which was to be the scene of bloodshed and murder. The man who made his Lordship acquainted with the geography of that *terra incognita* now known as Central India deserves more than a passing notice.

After the conclusion of the Second Maratha war, the embassy sent to Sindhia in 1805 under Mr. Graeme Mercer, possessed in its rank a young officer who was a native of Scotland, and who in after years became well-known in the literary world as Colonel James Tod.

This officer was born in 1782. At the age of 17 or 18, he came out to India as a cadet in the military service of the East India Company. After serving for about 22 or 23 years, he retired from India in 1823 and died in his native land in 1835.



From 1806 to 1823, he was employed in Rajputana at first to survey it and afterwards as political agent there. The nature of his services in that province will be evident from the following extract from the *Annual Biography and Obituary for 1835* :

"Almost immediately upon his arrival in that country, . . . . he began its survey, the details of which he has stated in the Memoir, and the result is given in the magnificent map which graces the *Annals*. In the maps prior to this survey, Rajputana was almost a total blank: nearly all the western and central states were wanting: the rivers were supposed to have a southerly course into the Nerbudda, and the position of the two capitals (the ancient and the modern) of Mewar, was precisely reversed, . . . . The map of Colonel Tod was completed in 1815, and presented to the Marquis of Hastings: . . . *The map was of vast utility to the Government, being made one of the foundations of Lord Hastings' plan of operations in the year 1817.*

"His surveys were continued without interruption, except by his indefatigable researches into the history and antiquities of the Rajput States, till 1817, when he was appointed political agent of government, having the sole control over the five principalities of Rajasthan: Mewar, Marwar, Jessulmer, Kotah, and Boondi."

The policy which was adopted towards the states of Central India by the Government of India has already been narrated. Tod, it seems, took advantage of the situation, by trying to produce in the minds of the Rajputs bitter hatred against the Marathas as well as Mahomedans. It was considered a matter of political expediency that the Rajputs, Marathas and the Mughals should not unite and make common cause against the British. Tod tried his best to bring about this state of affairs. It should be remembered that the Marathas would not have succeeded in gaining a rood of land in Central India but for the help which they received from the Rajput princes. Malcolm, in his *Memoir of Central India*, truly observes

"that the Rajput princes and chiefs of Jeypoor, Marwar, Mewar and Malwa, were either secretly or openly the supporters of the Mahratta invaders, to whose first invasion of Malwa, we are told by every Persian or Hindu writer that notices the subject, hardly any opposition was given; and we possess many testimonies to show, that they chiefly attributed their success, on this occasion, to the action of religious feeling."

The above-named author has alluded to the correspondence that took place between the Rajput Prince Raja Jai Singh and the Peshwa Bajirao the first. He writes :

"The celebrated Raja Jey Singh, prince of Jeypoor, greatly contributed to the conquest of Malwa and indeed of Hindustan, by the Mahrattas. The correspondence between this chief and the first Bajirao, would, if obtained, throw light upon this period of history. It is said to have commenced in a communication very characteristic of the times and the parties:—the ruler of the Mahratta State sent a verse of the Purana to Jey Singh which may be literally translated—'Thou art like the cloud which drinketh the waters of the sea, and returneth them with thunder to fertilize the earth. The mountains, in dread of Indra, fly to thee for protection. Thou art the tree of desires. Thou art the sea whence springeth the tree of desires. Who can tell thy depth? I have no power to describe the depth of the ocean: but in all thy actions remember Agastya Moonee.'"<sup>†</sup>

According to Hindu mythology, the sage Agastya Muni drank up the sea. The communication, therefore, though flattering, conveyed a metaphorical but distinct warning of what might happen, if he opposed the Brahmin sway.

\* *Loc. Cit., Ibid., Vol. I, p. 53.*

† *Ibid., pp. 54-55.*

"Jai Singh's answer, taken from the same sacred volume, was as follows :

"If the offspring of Brahma sin with me, I forgive them. This pledge I hold sacred. It was of no consequence that Agastya Moonee drank up the sea, but if God should doom the walls that retain the ocean to be thrown down, then the world would be destroyed, and what would become of Agastya Moonee ?"

Raja Jai Singh's meraphorical language was not difficult for the Peshwa to understand. It was a warning of the consequences that would ensue from breaking down long-established authority. It need hardly be said that the Peshwa and his successors always tried their best not to destroy the ancient houses of the reigning princes of Rajputana. Of course, Sindhia and Holkar, and their mercenary bands, perhaps at the instigation of the British Government of India, often fought with and plundered the Rajput princes, but they stopped short of their total annihilation.

It was reserved for Tod to enlarge on this aspect of affairs, to paint the Marathas in the blackest color possible and to represent the Rajput princes as the aggrieved and injured party. In an article in the first volume of the *Journal of the Puna Sarvajaniik Sabha* under the heading of Maratha Bakhars or chronicles and Grant Duff's History Marathas, which there are good reasons to believe was penned by the well-known Mr. Justice Ranade, the criticism on Tod as an historian is so very just, that it is reproduced below :

"He (Colonel Tod) has one measure of justice for the Rajputs, another for their Mahomedan and Maratha conquerors. He will speak with praise of a miserable and unprovoked raid by a Rajput chief, but has nothing but hard words to use when he has to describe perhaps a more excusable act of power on the part of the other nationalities. This partiality to his pet race leads the historian to render less than justice to the other nationalities, and to none more so than to the Marathas."

Tod was not content with abusing only the Marathas, but did not even spare one of the greatest, best and noblest of all the monarchs who ruled over India, of whose authentic history there is no doubt. If we are to believe Tod, Akbar the Great was the veriest incarnation of the devil who ever ruled India.

For our own part, we are inclined to the belief that Tod did all these to foment dissensions between the Rajputs on the one hand, and Marathas and Mugals on the other, and thus prevent for ever their making any common cause. There may be after all some truth in what he was accused of by his co-religionists and compatriots. It was alleged against him that he was corrupt and used to take bribes from the princes of Rajputana. Of course, the writer of the biographical sketch from which an extract has already been given above comes to his defence and says :

"We have some reason to think that the elevation of a person of Colonel Tod's military rank to a post not merely high, but to which so much power and authority was attached, gave umbrage to the late Sir David Ochterlony, who might feel that Colonel Tod's appointment trenchd upon his powers in the country. Surrounded, as Sir David always was, with natives, it is not to be wondered at if some of them breathed that calumny upon the purity of Colonel Tod's political conduct to which Bishop Heber rather indiscreetly alludes..."

A man of Sir David Ochterlony's position would not have recklessly made a state-

\* *Ibid.*, p. 55.

ment casting reflections on the conduct of a brother officer without being convinced of the truthfulness and justification of his allegation. Every one knows how difficult it is to prove such a charge as the one which Ochterlony preferred against Tod. That gallant knight must have been morally certain, although there was not sufficient legal evidence to bring the charge home against Tod.

The Governor-General, armed with the map of Central India and quite sanguine that the Rajput princes would remain neutral, nay would even help the British, assembled troops ostensibly to crush the Pindaris, but in reality the Maratha sovereigns. Prinsep even goes to the length of not only hinting but plainly putting it in black and white that the Pindaris were instigated by the Maratha princes to commit ravages in the British territories. He writes :

"It was an insidious kind of hostility, thus, under the mask of friendship and professions of attachment, to instigate the attacks of these irresponsible, unacknowledged bands; but it is not on this account the less likely to have been suggested by the hatred and tears of the Marhatta chiefs, or recommended by their notions of morality. If any proof were wanting, that these enterprises of the Pindaries were undertaken in concert with the Mahratta powers, it might be found in the circumstance of the latter having afterwards chosen the particular moment of our prosecuting measures for the suppression of the predatory associations, to rise themselves against the British supremacy."

From the above extract, it appears Prinsep bases his presumption of the Pindaris being instigated by the Maratha princes on the fact of the latter going to war with the British at a time when they had assembled troops ostensibly with the object of crushing the Pindaris. He adduces no arguments, brings no evidence in support of his statement. It has already been stated before that the Pindaris had been provoked to commit depredations in British territories by the latter trying to pursue and punish them. Even if they had not been provoked to do so, it is a gratuitous presumption on the part of the above-named author to say that the Maratha princes were in league with the Pindaris because they themselves rose against the British supremacy at the moment when measures were being prosecuted for the suppression of the predatory associations. There is no iota of evidence to support this presumption.

The Maratha princes rose because they were alarmed by the warlike preparations of the British and because they had not been taken into confidence and consulted as to the measures that should be pursued for the destruction of the Pindaris. They concluded that all the preparations were meant to be directed against them. They suspected, nay believed this, and it cannot be denied that they had good and strong grounds for this.

Kaye, in his life and correspondence of Malcolm, has tried to prove, and no unprejudiced reader can say that he has failed to do so, that the warlike preparations of the British were directed against the Maratha princes.

"Our military preparations" writes Sir John Kaye, "were on so grand a scale that these threatening appearances at the native courts were regarded fearlessly by all, hopefully by many. The magnificent army, or, rather the two magnificent armies which had taken the field, were equal to any human emergency that could arise. . . . .

"Let the reader place before him any map of India, and contemplate the expanse of country lying between the Kistnah and the Ganges rivers. Let him glance from Puna in the south-west to Cawnpore in the north-east : mark the positions of the principal native courts, and think of the magnificent armies, the very flower of the three presidencies, which were spreading themselves over that spacious territory, closing in upon Hindustan and the Deccan and compassing alike the Pindaree hordes and the substantive states in their toils. The sportsmen of the day, indeed, regarded it as a grand *battue* of the princes and chiefs of India, and we cannot be surprised if those princes and chiefs looked upon the matter somewhat in the same light, and thought that the Feringhees, after a long season of rest, were now again bracing themselves up for vigorous action, and were putting forth all their immense military resources in one comprehensive effort to sweep the native principalities from the face of the earth.

"The Mahratta was roused. He had been uneasy. He was now alarmed. . . .

"So it was, it appears to me, with the Peishwa and the Raja of Berar. They were alarmed by the gathering and the advance by our armies. They did not believe that these immense military preparations had been made simply for the suppression of the Pindaries. They thought that whatever the primary and ostensible object of the campaign might be—a campaign conducted by the Governor-General himself in person, at the head of the grand army, it would eventually be directed against the substantive Mahratta States. And this was no baseless suspicion. The probability of another Marhatta war, as the sequel of the Pindaree campaign, was the subject of elaborate state papers, and the small gossip of our camps. Statesmen solemnly discussed it at the council-board, and soldiers joyously predicted it at the mess-table. . . . It would have been wonderful if, under such circumstances, there had not been another war, if, considering the character of these princes, the evil councillors by whom they were surrounded, and their limited understanding of the views and intentions of the British Government, they had not regarded the movements of our armies with suspicion and alarm, and concerted the means of resisting our propable aggressions. They had at least as good a right to prepare for contingencies as we had. If, when the British Government first took up arms, and calculated the scale on which it would be expedient to conduct its military aspirations, the contingency of a Marhatta war was duly provided for, and that provision is to be considered demonstrative only of wisdom and forethought, we must be surely blinded by our national self-love, if we would denounce as treachery, or as folly, a like provision on the part of the Marhattas, who were in much greater danger than ourselves. We cannot surely expect all the world to dismount their guns whilst our own are loaded and primed and the portfire is burning in our hands."

That the Governor-General was of a perfidious character, that the proclamation against the Pindaris was merely a contrivance to deceive people and prevent them from knowing his real intention, which was to wage war on the Maratha princes, will be evident from the order which he issued to his troops after signing the treaty with Dowlat Rao Sindhia. The Governor-General was sorry that there was no war with that Maratha sovereign. His order ran as follows:

"The Governor-General has great pleasure in announcing to the army that the Maharajah Dowlat Rao Sindhia, has signed a treaty, by which his Highness engages to afford every facilitation to the British troops in their pursuit of the Pindaries through his dominions, and to co-operate actively towards the extermination of these brutal free-booters. In consequence, the troops and country of his Highness are to be regarded as those of an ally. *The generous confidence and animated zeal of the army may experience a shade of disappointment in the diminished prospect of serious exertion*; but the Governor-General is convinced that the reflection of every officer and soldier in the army will satisfy him that the carrying every point by equity and moderation is the proudest triumph for the British character."

With reference to this order, Kaye truly observes :

"It proves how little he (Lord Hastings) desired to conceal the fact that the army were longing for a war with the Mahratta States."

Had the British taken the Maratha princes into their confidence and consulted them as to the best measures that should be adopted for crushing the Pindatis, there would have been no Maratha war at all. The above-quoted author is also of the same opinion. He writes :

"Had the whole scope of our policy been fully understood at the Mahratta courts, had they known that we were really acting in good faith towards them and that our steady friendship could be secured by honestly co-operating with us for the suppression of the Pindaree hordes, whilst no real danger threatened their independence but that which they might bring upon themselves, by their own rashness, they would not have suffered their fears to hurry them into aggression. But they only knew that we were putting our armies in motion from all points and that in every cantonment of India the talk was about the probabilities of another war with the Mahrattas."

Kaye was after all an Englishman and so he takes a lenient view of the conduct of his co-religionists and compatriots. But, as said above, the Britishers were not acting in good faith towards the princes of India. Thus Jaipur was sacrificed to the greed of adventurers of the type of Amir Khan.

But Earl Moira, desirous of going to war with the Marathas, induced the Rajput princes by means of his emissaries to send embassies to him asking him to take them under the protection of the East India Company's Government. These requests of the Rajput princes served him as a pretext to intimate to Sindhia that the solemn treaty which the British Government of India had concluded with him a decade ago was to be abrogated and a new one to be substituted in its stead. For our own part, we believe that Tod, the historian of the Rajputs, was the principal emissary of the Marquess of Hastings in stirring up the princes of Rajputana and inducing them to seek the protection of the Company.

It was perhaps the part of an emissary which Tod played so successfully in Rajputana, which led Hasting to appoint him to the important charge of five states, thus passing over the claims of others who were senior to him in age and service.

Tod succeeded in coaxing the Rajputs to seek the protection of the East India Company. It was perhaps with this object in view that he flattered their national vanity and was induced to write that history of their race, which, possessing great and undoubted merits, is disfigured by statements which are greatly exaggerated and are also devoid of truth. Sir Henry Lawrence, who was accredited to Rajputana as the Governor-General's agent in Lord Dalhousie's time, wrote in a letter to Sir John Kaye, dated Mount Abu, June 19th, 1854 :

"You are right in thinking that the Rajputs are a dissatisfied, opium-eating race. Tod's picture, however it may have applied to the past, was a caricature on the present. There is little, if any, truth or honesty in them and not much more manliness. Every principality is more or less in trouble."

\* *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 193, f. n.

† *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 189.

§ Life of Sir H. Lawrence by Sir Herbert Edwardes and H. Merivale, Vol. II, p. 256.

Lord Hastings brought the Rajput princes into the web of the Company's subsidiary alliance. It will be remembered that the Jaipur prince had greatly helped the Government of India in the time of the Marquess Wellesley in their war with the Marathas. After the departure of the Marquess Wellesley, Sir George Barlow adopted a line of policy which Sir Charles Metcalfe condemned in very strong terms.

Why the Governor-General entered into alliance with the Rajputs has been narrated by him as follows :

"The former treaty with Sindhia, which I had declared annulled on the proof of his hostile practices, contained an article, equally discreditable and embarrassing. We were bound by it to have no correspondence with the Rajput States, and were thus debarred from granting to them that protection which they offered to repay by co-operating for the suppression of the Pindaries. Emancipated from so injurious a shackle, I received all these states as feudatory to the British Government. Though each possessed considerable force, their reciprocal estrangements (proceeding chiefly from punctilious, and often hereditary quarrels between the reigning princes) prevented their ever forming any union."

How Lord Hastings obliged Sindhia to accept the treaty forced on him has been narrated by that nobleman as follows :

"Certainly, had Sindhia, by much the most powerful of the native sovereigns, been in the field at the head of his assembled veteran troops, with the fine and well-manned artillery which he possessed, time, as well as encouragement, would have been afforded to the other confederated powers for resorting to arms in so many quarters as must have made our movements cautious, consequently protracted, under heavy expense. The incurrence of such circumstances was at all events to be risked by us : since, I repeat, it was not a matter of option, whether the extinction of an evil so intolerable as the ravages of the Pindaries should be undertaken. It has been said, however, that a confident expectation was entertained of achieving the main purpose, while every hostile speculation of the native sovereigns would be repressed by our sudden pre-occupation of particular positions : and this calculation applied in a more special degree to Sindhia. Residing at Gwalior, he was in the heart of the richest part of his dominions ; but independently of the objection that those provinces were separated from our territory by the Jumna, there was a military defect in the situation, to which it must be supposed the Maharaja had never adverted. About twenty miles south of Gwalior, a ridge of very abrupt hills, covered with tangled wood peculiar to India, extends from the little Sind to the Chumbal, which rivers form the flank boundaries of the Gwalior district and its dependencies. There are but two routes by which carriages, and perhaps cavalry, can pass that chain ; one along the little Sind, and another not far from the Chumbal. By my seizing with the centre division a position which would bar any movement along the little Sind and placing Major-General Donkin's division at the back of the other pass, Sindhia was reduced to the dilemma of subscribing the treaty which I offered to him or of crossing the hills through by-paths, attended by the few followers who might be able to accompany him, sacrificing his train of artillery (above one hundred brass guns) with all its appendages, and abandoning at once to us his most valuable possessions. The terms imposed upon him were essentially unqualified submission, though so coloured as to avoid making him feel public humiliation."

The Pindaris were divided into different *darras* or *labbars*, that is, companies,

\* Lord Hastings' Summary, p. 100. General Appendix to Report from Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company.

† *Ibid.*, p. 97.

and as long as they acted in concert, they were almost invincible. But dissensions broke out among them, and so it was not very difficult to destroy them. It is not necessary to describe in detail all the actions that were fought against them. The several works on British Indian History, written by Mill and Wilson, Thornton, Macfarlane, Beveridge, Nolan, Malcolm and above all, Prinsep's Transactions have given detailed information regarding the manner in which the Pindari hordes were dealt with by the troops commanded by British officers. Those Pindari leaders who submitted and betrayed their whilom comrades were provided with lands calculated to produce several thousand rupees a year. But Chitu alone held out and did not surrender himself to the British. His fate was miserable, for he met with a tragic end, being devoured by a tiger.

Although the latter-day Pindaris were mostly bandits and robbers, yet they were not altogether devoid of humane feelings and, therefore, they were able to gather many followers. Writes H. H. Wilson :\*

"That so many should still have adhered to their leaders, amidst all the hardships and dangers which they underwent, is a singular proof of that fidelity to their leaders which characterises the natives of India, as nothing could have been more easy than for a Pindary to have deserted his captain, and become identified with the peasantry. The tenacity with which some of their principal leaders clung to the life of a wanderer and a plunderer, preferring privation, peril and death, to the ease and security of tranquil social existence, exhibited also that impatience of control, that love of independence which is the general attribute of half-civilised and martial people. It has been remarked as extraordinary, that in many parts of the country, and particularly in Harawati, the villagers were disinclined to give any information that might lead to the discovery and destruction of a Pindary band, but the inhabitants of those countries had never suffered any greater injury from the Pindaries than from the other component members of the Marhatta army, they considered rapine inherent in the system, had often taken part in it themselves, looked with sympathy and admiration upon the hardships and hazards which their countrymen and fellow-plunderers underwent. The state of society in Central India was similar to that of Europe in the early part of the middle ages, when robbers and outlaws, free companions and banditti, were objects of less terror than the more powerful and equally rapacious baron, the more necessitous and equally unscrupulous monarch."

\* Vol. III, p. 211.

## CHAPTER LII.

### THE WAR WITH THE JAT PRINCES.

Lord Hastings succeeded admirably by his diplomacy to detach Sindhia from the other Maratha confederates and prevented him from joining them in the war which was going to be undertaken against them. He also made the Rajputs subserve his purpose. But he was not easy in his mind regarding the Jat princes of the Doab, of whom the most notable was that of Bharatpur. Lake had signally failed in his two attempts to capture that place. Hastings did not consider it expedient to court another disaster by declaring war against Bharatpur. But it was deemed politic by him to fight two petty princes of that race in the Doab, *viz*, the Rajas of Hathras and Mursan. Prinsep mentions why it was necessary for the Governor-General to reduce them.

"Hutras was reckoned one of the strongest forts in India. Dya-Ram was a Jat, and derived no small accession of confidence and estimation, from being a relation of the Bhurtpoor Raja, with whom he claimed equality of rank. The fort was kept in the closest state of repair. . . . At the close of 1816, it was resolved to reduce both Daya-Ram and Bhugwant (Raja of Moorsar) to the level of subjects, and to employ an overwhelming force for the purpose, as well to bear down all opposition, as to give *eclat* to the measure. . . . On the 11th of February (1817), the place (Hutras) was invested on all sides. Dya-Ram was then summoned to surrender a gate of his fort and allow of its being dismantled."

In his *Private Journal*, dated January 10th, 1816,† the Marquess of Hastings wrote that Dya-Ram "refused to let any of the Company's servants, civil or military, go into the fort of Hathras." For this great offence he was to be punished. It was said that the fort of Hathras was built after the model of that of Bharatpur and hence the Governor-General was desirous that the British officers should be allowed to inspect it and be thus enabled to successfully besiege and reduce the latter fortress, before which they had been defeated and had thus lost their military prestige.

Of course, the spirited Jat prince was not going to tamely submit and very properly refused to surrender the fort and comply with the demand. His lord, whose aggression on his territory was quite unprovoked. Raja Daya-Ram's resources were not equal to those of the Company and so resistance for him for any length of time was not to be expected. But he fought very bravely. Writes H. H. Wilson:

"Batteries were opened against the town and fort, and a vigorous bombardment was kept up upon the latter. A practical breach was effected in the walls of the town by the 23rd. On the 2nd of March, a shell made its way into the powder magazine, and was followed by a tremendous explosion, which completed the work of desolation within the ramparts. The besieged still maintained a show of resistance, and returned the fire of the batteries, but Daya-Ram, now convinced of the futility of resistance, . . . effected

\* Vol. I, p. 418.

† Panini Office reprint, p. 273.



his escape at midnight with a small body of retainers. They were encountered by a party of the dragoons, but made good their retreat, after inflicting more loss than they suffered, being armed with back and breast-plates and gauntlets of steel.”\*

The capture of Hathras dispirited the Raja of Mursan, who surrendered his fort without any resistance.

“Thus,” writes Prinsep, “was this important object gained, without any sacrifice of lives, while the impression of the utter futility of resistance spread far and wide through Hindustan, and even through the remote Dukhun, where it materially influenced the subsequent conduct of the Maratha chiefs and killedars.”†

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\* (Mill & Wilson, VIII, pp. 93-94).

† (Vol. I. pp. 419-420).

## CHAPTER LIII

### THE WAR WITH THE MARATHA PRINCES

Of the four Maratha Princes, *viz.*, the Sindhia, the Peshwa, the Bhonsla of Nagpur, and the Holkar, the manner in which the Sindhia had been entrapped by Lord Hastings has been already mentioned before. The other three were being so badly treated by the British, that they were provoked to go to war with them. How Lord Hastings made preparations for the war has been thus described in "Memoirs of Colonel Skinner:"

"So early as the end of 1816, a number of detachments were thrown out from various points with so much skill as to check the lubburs of that season with considerable success, and great loss on the part of the Pindarees. But arrangements on a far more extensive scale were in progress, and while negotiations were opened with those princes or chieftains who could be brought to reason, the preparations for coercing the refractory were silently but industriously carried on. During the summer and autumn of 1817, the various bodies of troops assembled at their posts. The grand army, under command of Lord Hastings in person, consisting of about 34,000 regular troops, was formed in three divisions and a reserve, and occupied positions at Agra, Secundra, near Kalpee, on the Jumna, and Kalingar in Bundelcund; the reserve being stationed at Rewaree, south-west of Dehlee.

"The army of the Dekkan, under command of Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Hislop, was formed in five divisions and a reserve; and amounted to 57,000 regulars, which were disposed so as to cross the Nerbudda simultaneously at Hindia and Hoshingabad, to occupy positions in Berar and in Candeish and act as circumstances should indicate; while a division from Guzerat was to enter Malwah by Dohud. To this large force of regular troops—the largest by far that ever took the field from British India—was added 23,000 of irregular horse, of which 13,000 were attached to the army of the Dekkan, and 10,000 to that of Bengal.

"This vast scheme, rendered complete by some subsidiary details, was calculated to embrace the whole disaffected region, and advancing inwards, like one of Timour's or Chengiz-Khan's gigantic hunts, to converge to any central point that should prove the fittest for final action, and thus gather together and crush, without hope of escape, every refractory or treacherous power within its circuit. Never, assuredly, was any plan of military operations better concerted, to effect its purpose and never was any combination of diplomatic and military tactics more completely crowned with success. The end of that year, and the space of a single month, saw the Peishwah and the Bhonslah, with the representatives of Holkar, baffled alike in their intrigues and their efforts at open resistance. The battle of Kirkee, . . . . . sent the first a hunted fugitive, to a quiet asylum. The battles of Seetabuldee and Nagpore, in like manner, proved the death-blows to the Bhonslah chief, . . . The subjection of the once proud family of Holcar cost even less time and trouble."

In the following chapters will be mentioned the manner in which war was brought about with those Maratha princes.

## CHAPTER LIV.

### THE LAST OF THE PESHWAS

The treatment which the last Peshwa received at the hands of the English was only a shade less cruel and tyrannical than that which their prototypes, the Spanish, are charged with in their dealings with the monarchs of Peru and Mexico. But for the help which the last Peshwa Baji Rao rendered to the English, the consolidation of their power over the peninsula of India would have been impossible. It is true, he played into their hands. He was false to himself and false to the people over whom he ruled, but it must be admitted that he was always true to the British. Gratitude forms a marked trait in the character of Asiatics in general and of the Hindus in particular. Baji Rao was grateful to the English for regaining his throne at Puna. He was never tired of giving expression to the deep debt of gratitude he owed to the British for his position.

In the early years of the nineteenth century Lord Valentia, a well-known traveller, came out to India and paid a visit to Puna. He was no mean judge of men. He had three interviews with the Peshwa and on page 130, Vol. II, of his *Travels*, he has recorded the impression produced on his mind by Baji Rao. Lord Valentia was satisfied that the Peshwa highly valued the English alliance and was sincerely delighted when he heard the news that Holkar's fort of Chandor in Nasik had fallen into the hands of the English army.

Sir James Mackintosh Chief Justice of Bombay, was undoubtedly one of the most learned men of his age. He had travelled widely and seen many countries and nations. Certainly he can be credited with being a very good judge of human character. He was so favourably impressed with the personality of Baji Rao, that he considered that Brahmin ruler of the Deccan far superior to George III and Napoleon, to whom he had been presented.

The British resident at the Court of the Peshwa was Colonel Barry Close. He had every opportunity to know the Peshwa very intimately and to become acquainted with his views and sentiments. That Resident had no doubt that the Peshwa was sincere in his gratitude to the English. He had never seen the Peshwa so evidently pleased or heard him more unequivocally declare his sentiments.

It was his interest to be grateful to the British for his restoration to power. Mrs. Maria Graham, afterwards better known as Lady Caldecott, visited Puna in 1809 and she described the Peshwa as a prisoner in the hands of the English. She was quite right in looking upon his situation as that of a prisoner.

Prisoner though he was, he was grateful to the English for his existence. While he expressed his sentiments of gratitude to the English, what were the feelings of the latter towards him? They behaved towards him in a manner which goaded him to make the last effort, which is not unusual for a prisoner to make, to get out of his

prison house. British had no regard for him and they taxed and strained his patience to the utmost.

To fully understand the nature of the treatment which Baji Rao received at the hands of the English, we have to turn our attention to that period of Indian history when the Duke of Wellington was commanding the combined forces of the allies in the Deccan. That Duke entertained no high opinion of any Indian,—prince or peasant. This is not to be wondered at. A jaundiced man sees everything yellow. Because he himself did not act upon the ten commandments of the religion which he professed, he naturally thought others were also as bad as he himself.\* With his perverse moral nature, it was not unnatural for him to impute motives to others, not to see anything good in their conduct and always seem to see instances of 'bad faith' in their doings, forgetting all the while that it was his co-religionists and compatriots in India who were guilty of bad faith towards the princes and people of the country.

Sir Arthur Wellesley advised his co-religionists to practise treachery in their dealings with their ally, the Peshwa. To raise traitors in the camp of the Peshwa was the policy that he urged his countrymen to adopt. In his despatches, he wrote :

"I certainly had a bad opinion of the Peishwa, he has no public feeling, and his private disposition is terrible. I have no positive proof that he has been treacherous, but I have a strong suspicion of it.

"It may be asked, will you leave a fellow of that kind in possession of that government ? I answer, I have no remedy ; I cannot take it for the British Government, without a breach of faith and another war. I do not know whether I should mend the matter in respect to treachery by giving him either of his brothers as a dewan ; but I do know, that if I was to give the government over to Amrut Rao, I should establish there a most able fellow who, if he should prove treacherous, would be a worse thorn in the side of the British Government than the creature who is Peshawa at present can ever be."†

Again, in his letter to Lieut. Frissell, dated 17th February 1804, he wrote many things which he considered to be acts of treachery on the part of the Peshwa against the British.

Yes, the ministers of the Peshwa were to be bribed in order to betray their master. This was a counsel of perfection which was out-machiavelling Machiavelli himself. But as long as Sir Barry Close was the Resident at Puna, he did not act on the Wellesleyan policy. There is no evidence at least from the published records to say that that resident carried into execution Sir Arthur Wellesley's suggestion. Close's opinion of the Peshwa has already been given above.

But with the appointment of Mountstuart Elphinstone as Resident at Puna, the advice of Sir Arthur Wellesley began to be carried out to the very letter. Elphinstone was a native of Scotland and the youngest son of a Scotch Baron. He had not received much of literary education in his native country when he was sent out at

\* Mr. Pearson, in his "National Life and Character," says—"Nelson, who intrigued with his friend's wife, Wellington, who was certainly not irreproachable and Warren Hastings, who purchased a divorced wife from a needy foreigner, would scarcely be permitted now to save the Empire." (Page 213).

† (Vol. III. p. 19.)

the early age of sixteen as a writer on the East India Company's establishment in Bengal. This appointment was secured to him through the interest of his uncle, who was at that time Chairman of the East India Company. In those days Scotchmen were given many lucrative posts in India, because Mr. Dundas, who was at the head of Indian affairs in Great Britain, was himself a native of Scotland and so naturally preferred his kith and kin to outsiders. Elphinstone's mother prevailed on Dundas to use his influence with Lord Mornington in favour of her son. Lord Mornington was at that time Governor-General of India. So on the recommendation of Dundas, he took great interest in Elphinstone and appointed him to the diplomatic service as one of the Assistants to the Resident at Puna. When he was appointed diplomatic Assistant at Puna, the Peshwa had not parted with his independence, for he had not as yet agreed to Mornington's scheme of subsidiary alliance. The British Government at that time were making every attempt to ensnare the Peshwa in that scheme, and from Elphinstone's Journals, extracts from which have been given by his biographer Sir T. E. Colebrooke, it is evident how the Political Resident and his assistants at Puna worked hard to make the Peshwa believe that his safety consisted in placing the yoke of the subsidiary alliance on his neck. The following extract from Elphinstone's Journal needs no word of comment :

"Major Hemming said the Maharattas were too wise to be tempted to admit a subsidiary force of ours. He mentioned that the Peishwa was going to raise several battalions, to be commanded by Brahmins. It appears to me that the Peishwa must feel his subjection to Sindia, that he must be convinced that Sindia's strength arises from his disciplined troops, that as soon as he is convinced that none but Europeans can form corps capable of opposing other Europeans, he will see the advantage of having Englishmen to oppose Sindia's Frenchmen. Sindia is not at present in a condition to resist any attempt of ours to establish troops at Poona. I hope he may not be so weak as to free the Peishwa from apprehension."

The Peshwa became a prisoner of the English by signing the Treaty of Bassein and this Treaty was the cause of the Second Maratha War. Throughout the whole of this war, Elphinstone served as an assistant on the staff of Sir Arthur Wellesley. It was in this capacity that he learned from the Iron Duke that crooked policy which passes under the name of diplomacy and statecraft in Indian history.

After the war with the Marathas was over, Elphinstone was appointed Resident at Nagpur, and there he served upwards of four years. The objects for which the East India Company used to appoint Residents at the Courts of Indian princes were to foment intrigues and domestic dissensions and thus to pave the way for the ultimate absorption of those principalities.

The Company's government expected Elphinstone to discharge these duties with enthusiasm and zeal, that is to say, he was to carry on intrigues and play the part of a spy, for his patron, Sir Arthur Wellesley, wrote to him, when he was appointed Political Resident at Nagpur to do so.

The course of intrigue which Elphinstone followed in Nagpur, made him a perfect

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\* Vol. I, p. 34.

master of statecraft and his moral nature debased and degraded. This he himself admitted, for he wrote in one of his Journals :

"Since I came to Nagpur I have been dreadfully coarse and unfeeling. This I attribute in some measure to business, which forces and leads me to despise refined thought "

This training in intrigues, in tempting others with corruption and bribery in order to betray their masters, made Elphinstone a renowned diplomatist, a perfect hypocrite, and a successful follower of Machiavelli. On this depended his promotion and his subsequent employment to all offices of diplomacy.

He served in Nagpur for four years. In 1809 he was sent to Afghanistan. But his diplomatic mission to Afghanistan during the regime of Minto was an utter failure, for he did not succeed in duping the wideawake Afghan monarch.\*

Like all other Britishers, he was ambitious to make a name for himself and also to benefit his co-religionists and compatriots serving in India. While he was in Afghanistan, he wrote to the Governor-General to take Sindh from the Amirs of that country.†

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\* "The Mission was now virtually closed, though the name was kept up for some months to enable the envoy and his coadjutors to prepare their report on the countries they had visited. He returned depressed at the failure of the sanguine hopes with which he had started some six months before, and he never, in his letters or journals, reverted to this period of his career without some expression of dissatisfaction." Colebrooke's *Life of Mountstuart Elphinstone*, Vol. I, p. 218.

† "The Dooranee Government, pressed by their urgent wants, made overtures to the Indian Government, which might have proved tempting under other circumstances, to raise money on the security of the revenues of Sind. The first proposal amounted to no more than ordinary methods of Eastern governments, of granting assignments of the revenues of provinces, either for Military Service, or to Bankers for advances of money. The proposal was that the Indian Government should rent Sind, and did not necessarily convey a cession of sovereign rights, though it involved complete independence of administration.

"The proposal was summarily rejected. Somewhat later the subject was renewed and a proposal was made for a complete cession of the right to the territory, in consideration of an annual payment. In the meantime, intelligence reached Peshawar that our relations with the rulers of Sind were embroiled, and that the envoy sent to Hyderabad had left the country, and that a friendly reception had been given to an agent representing Persian and the dreaded French influence."

"Mr. Elphinstone thought it his duty to submit the King's proposal to the Government of Calcutta, alluding, at the same time, to the departure of the British envoy from Hyderabad, and assuming, therefore, that the proposal might fall in with the views of the Government. This proposal was accompanied by another suggestion equally important, and which may be regarded as Mr. Elphinstone's own. A moderate subsidy would, he thought, give the King such a preponderance over his rivals as to render his throne for the time stable, and bind him to our interests against any invasion from the west; and this, if combined with the cession of Sind, would give some vigour to our ally, without diminishing our own resources, and the whole proposal would have the effect of shutting up the southern route to India, while it afforded the means of defence on the northern.

".....This bold proposal, thus submitted to the Government, though guarded with every consideration of prudence and justice, brought on the young envoy a severe reproof. The plan of subsidising the Cabul monarchy appeared rash and an uncertain advantage.

".....Whatever might be the King's claim on Sind, the territory was virtually independent, and he could transfer only a nominal sovereignty. The Government would be disinclined under any circumstances to enter on a project of such extent. 'But in fact', so the despatch proceeded, 'considerations intimately connected with those fundamental principles of political discretion, as

Minto was at that time the Governor-General. He turned a deaf ear to Elphinstone's proposal, since it was not agreeable to him. But now as Resident at Puna, he had to serve a different master. The Marquess of Hastings was an unscrupulous and ambitious man. It was his policy to bring as much of India under the sway of his countrymen as he possibly could, by fraud and force. And in Elphinstone he found an admirable tool to carry out his purpose.\*

well as of political morality, by which alone the true honour and prosperity of the British Empire in the East can be permanently maintained, would under any circumstances, oppose the adoption of that project, while its practicability, and success are too doubtful to warrant the attempt even if it were unopposed by the dictates of prudent policy and the obligations of political justice," *Ibid.*, pages 218 to 221.

Elphinstone was so ambitious that, because there was no scope for his ambition in India after the Third Mahratta War, he did not accept the Governor-Generalship of India when offered to him. In his diary, dated September 1, 1834, he wrote :

"But the first question is, would the situation suit me if there were no obstacle to my taking it ? I must premise that, as there is no particular crisis in India, and I have no particular abilities, I may assume that it is of no consequence to the public whether I go or another. I have, therefore, only personal considerations to attend to. *Now the chance of great events occurring is not considerable, nor is it certain if they did occur, that I should conduct them with distinction.....In foreign politics I should probably be most in my element. I suppose, coming after an unpopular man.....I should go on smoothly with the service but I could not expect to be so popular as at Bombay.....and where I brought along with me an addition of territory, increase to allowances,.....The chance, therefore, is on the whole that I should not augment my reputation.* Titles, even if I gained them, would be of no value unless gained by actions, the chance of which has been discussed. My time out there would pass in comparative misery.....

"I ought to remember, however, that in these days glory is out of fashion, and if I were to resist a Russian, it would be less thought of than if I had proposed a reduction in some trifling tax at home ; while, with respect to faults, I shall find the popular leaders much more captious and quick-sighted than the old members of Parliament, and the Ministers much less decided in defending measures of which they had not previously expressed disapprobation."

From the above, there can be no doubt in the mind of any reasonable man of the ambitious nature of Elphinstone.

\* How unscrupulous Elphinstone himself was will be evident from the following extracts from one of his papers, probably written in 1811 and 1812.

"To resume our former policy and seize every opportunity of returning to the situation from which we voluntarily receded in 1805, and to proceed in the same spirit till we had established an efficient control over every state on this side of the Indus, I see no difficulty in effecting this except what arises from our treaties, which I would not take a step, directly or indirectly, to infringe : but I think that it requires pains and sacrifices on our part to preserve those treaties which are so hurtful to our interest, and that by letting things take their natural course, we should soon get rid of them. Holkar's Government has expired, and its treaties along with it. Nothing prevents our making a subsidiary treaty with the Raja of Berar. Sindia would soon fall either into our arms or those of Meer Khan : and his surrender of his claims on the Rajputs might be made the condition of his obtaining peace in the one case, or our alliance in the other.....Ranjeet Singh's sincere friendship would be of the greatest value to us, but if he quarrelled with us within a year or two, we shall be able to overturn his Government.....As for the Talpoorees, I would greatly prefer a just war with them to a treaty,"

Colebrooke, the biographer of Elphinstone, says, "there is no reason to suppose that it ever formed the base of a State paper." No, on the contrary, the biographer should have written

Elphinstone served under Wellington in the Second Maratha War. While serving in this capacity, intimacy sprang up between him and the future Duke. After the conclusion of that war, he was posted as Resident at Nagpur. In a letter to him dated 29th January, 1804, the future Duke gave expression to his views regarding the Marathas, which should be quoted here. He wrote to Elphinstone :

"The Mahrattas are but little in the habit of adhering to truth....." Again, "Under these circumstances of irregularity and *want of principle and good faith*, and as it appears impossible to raise the views of those with whom we are obliged to act above those of a Pindary or a rapacious amildar, I have only to recommend to you to continue your efforts to oblige the Rajah to withdraw the few troops who remain in Berar, . . ."

The words put in italics in the above extract are no doubt curious reading. What principle and good faith were the British themselves exhibiting in their dealings with their non-Christian antagonists?

The Duke himself lacked in principle and good faith for the manner in which he poisoned the mind of every one in authority against the Peshwa. In his letter to Major Shawe, dated the 26th January, 1804, the Duke wrote :

"I certainly have a bad opinion of the Peishwa, he has no public feeling, and his private disposition is terrible. I have no positive proof that he has been treacherous, but I have a strong suspicion of it, . . ."

Again, he wrote to Major Malcolm on the 27th January, 1804 .

"I have written fully to the Governor-General and to Shawe about the Peishwa, . . . I have also laid open the Peishwa's character, rather more than it has been lately."

Yet with that consummate hypocrisy and art of dissimulation of which he was a perfect master, he wrote on the 30th January, 1804, to Lieut., Frissell, who was acting as Resident at Puna:

"The Peishwa should be made to understand, that the British Government feel for the honour, the security, and the prosperity of his Government in the same manner as they do for that of the Company, that they are too strong to render it necessary *that they should have recourse to intrigues to overturn his Government, if they should wish it, which is by no means likely.* . . ."

The words in italics are a curious commentary on the Duke's advocating the bribing of the Peshwa's ministers to betray their master and the measures adopted by Elphinstone, which will be presently narrated, to encompass the ruin of the Peshwa.

The future Duke failed in his attempt to poison the mind of Sir Barry Close, who was Resident at Puna, against the Peshwa; he did not succeed in imparting to the Resident that hatred which he cherished in his bosom against the Peshwa. For seven years, Sir Barry Close was Resident at Puna. During that long time, he had good opportunities to judge the character of the Peshwa. The opinion he formed of Baji Rao, has already been given above. Sir Barry Close was not influenced by the perverse views of the future Duke. He refused to borrow other's eyes or spectacles to see the conduct of the Peshwa or to read in his actions some sinister

hat "there is every reason to suppose that that paper guided the policy of Marquess Hastings and Elphinstone in their dealings with the princes of India."



motives. What sort of man Sir Barry Close was will be gathered from the description of Elphinstone himself. According to him,

"A strong and hardy frame, a clear head, and vigorous understanding, fixed principles, unshaken courage, contempt for pomp and pleasure, entire devotion to the public service, joined to the utmost modesty and simplicity, formed the character of Sir Barry Close—a character such as one would rather think imagined in ancient Rome than met with in our own age and nation."<sup>\*</sup>

Instead of dealing direct with the Peshwa Sir Barry Close appointed a Parsi by name Kharshedji Jamshedji Modi as his agent to transact business with the Peshwa and his Court. This appointment gave satisfaction to all the parties concerned in the matter, since the Parsi agent was a man of judgment and great address. But when Elphinstone came as Resident to Puna in 1811, he upset Close's arrangement, which had so far acted very smoothly without producing any friction between the Peshwa and the British. It does not appear from the records that the interests of the latter had suffered in any way by the manner in which Kharshedji transacted the business of the British Residency. But the first act of Elphinstone when he came to Puna was the removal of this man from the post which he had held with great credit to himself and to the benefit of all parties concerned.<sup>†</sup>

Elphinstone considered himself so well-versed in Maratha statecraft that in his opinion it was not necessary for him to employ the Parsi any longer as intermediary between himself and the Peshwa for the transaction of state business. Moreover, it was alleged that Kharshedji had been won over to the Peshwa's interests, of which, of course, there is no evidence. In the step which Elphinstone took he displayed considerable want of tact. Kharshedji had been in power for a number of years and had enjoyed the confidence of Colonel Sir Barry Close. But with the arrival of Elphinstone, he found himself deprived of his power, shorn of authority, and, as it appeared to him, disgraced in the eyes of the public. The change was also not welcome to the Peshwa. As diplomatists and political officers the British are very troublesome to deal with. His removal from authority was nothing short of humiliation to Kharshedji and was not calculated to inspire the Peshwa with confidence in Elphinstone. Since power is sweet to everyone, it is not impossible that, to avenge himself on Elphinstone, Kharshedji made the Peshwa acquainted with Elphinstone's

\* Colebrooke's Elphinstone, Vol. I, p. 270.

† In Colebrooke's Life of Mountstuart Elphinstone there is no mention of Mr. Kharshedji Modi at all. It must be admitted that Colebrooke has suppressed many important facts and has painted his hero as an immaculate saint rather than as a worldly-wise man and diplomatist with little sense of high moral principles.

From one of the extracts from Elphinstone's diary with which Colebrooke has furnished us it would seem that Elphinstone used to exhibit his temper or rather adopt a bullying tone while talking to the Peshwa and his Minister. Under date October 20, 1812, Elphinstone writes in his diary :

"I have been thinking of another resolution which I must mention more openly from the details which it involves, this is to correct my temper, particularly on occasions of business . . . I must be particularly cautious with the Peishwa and his Minister, whom it is my business to conciliate, though I have neither respect nor esteem for either of them." (I. 271).

political views and scheming designs. The Peshwa was alarmed and naturally could not look upon the new British political as his friend and well-wisher. He commenced to cherish the most bitter hatred against Elphinstone.

Kharshedji seemed to Elphinstone to be a thorn in his side, and hence his destruction or removal from the Peshwa's dominion in the Deccan was highly desirable. Elphinstone, on the mere suspicion of his advising the Peshwa against the British, required him to leave the Deccan and retire to Guzerat. But as Kharshedji was about to leave Puna, he died of poison. According to the version of the British, either he took the poison himself in order to commit suicide, or else he was poisoned at the Peshwa's suggestion. None of these theories advanced by the British satisfactorily account for Kharshedji's death. They based the theory of his committing suicide on the allegation that his corrupt practices would become public as soon as he left Puna. Now, this theory will hardly hold water when we remember the fact that he was already in the bad books of Elphinstone and his going to Guzerat would place him beyond the reach of Elphinstone's power to punish him.

The alternative theory that he was poisoned at the Peshwa's suggestion, is equally absurd. It is alleged that the Peshwa did so because Kharshedji knew too many of his secrets. Now, what was the reason which prompted Elphinstone to remove Kharshedji from the Deccan? It was because it was alleged that he had been won over to the Peshwa's interest and because it was suspected that he had been advising the Peshwa against the British "by constantly enlarging on the great gains which the British Government had received from the treaty of Bassein." If these allegations and suspicions have any leg to stand upon, does it stand to reason that the Peshwa should have poisoned his well-wisher and friend? The esteem in which he was held by the Peshwa is evident from his having given land to him in Guzerat, which Kharshedji's descendants enjoy to this day. It being admitted by the English that Kharshedji was a great favourite with the Peshwa, it passes one's understanding why the Peshwa should have poisoned him.

The above considerations lead to one and only one reasonable conclusion, *viz.*, that if Kharshedji died of poison, he did not take it himself to commit suicide, nor could it have been given to him at the Peshwa's suggestion, but in all probability it was administered to him by some one of the hired emissaries of Elphinstone. There is nothing improbable or impossible in it. The attitude of Elphinstone towards Kharshedji is in itself sufficient to cast the suspicion on him. Kharshedji knew a great many of Elphinstone's secrets; he knew the plot that was being hatched in the Residency against the Peshwa, hence it was desirable to remove him by poison, just as the Borgias used to do in bye-gone days.

But the measure which Elphinstone adopted in ordering Kharshedji to leave Puna was not the only one which destroyed good understanding between him and the Peshwa. Elphinstone did every thing in his power to try the patience of the Peshwa and alienate his friendship. The Peshwa repeatedly asked the Resident to settle his claims on the Nizam and on the Gaekwar. Elphinstone did not display his wonted energy in settling the matter.

It is necessary here to refer in more detail to the nature of the claims which the Peshwa advanced on the Gaekwar's government.

It was in 1751 that Dummaji Gaekwar was made a prisoner by the Peshwa Balaji Rao in the Deccan and was not released till he had executed a bond by which he agreed to equally partition both the territory already acquired, and all future conquests in Guzerat. Dummaji also bound himself to maintain ten thousand horse to assist the Peshwa when required, and to pay an annual tribute of five lacs and twenty-five thousand rupees, and to contribute a certain sum for the support of the Satara Raja's establishment. Part of this tribute Dummaji and his descendants never paid to the Peshwa; the arrears thus amounted to about a crore of rupees. The Peshwa urged the Resident to take steps to settle these pecuniary claims of his on the Gaekwar. There was an agent of the Gaekwar at Puna by the name of Bapu Myral, who was found unfit to settle these matters. Hence the Peshwa desired that some one else should be sent from Baroda who was competent to deal with those questions. The Baroda government nominated Gangadhar Shastri as Gaekwar's agent. The nomination of this man was highly offensive to the Peshwa and he strongly objected to it. But Elphinstone totally ignored the Peshwa's protests and forced, as it were, Gangadhar Shastri on him. Elphinstone refused to attach any weight to the Peshwa's objection, because when Gangadhar Shastri's name was proposed to the Peshwa in 1811, the latter did not raise any objection!

It is necessary to narrate the rise of Gangadhar Shastri. He was a Brahman of very humble parentage. In his early life, he was a servant in the Phadke family of Puna and it was said that he had been once insolent to the Peshwa. Vain and shrewd as he was, he knew how to get on in the world. At the time of which we are writing, the English were by fraud and intrigue trying to consolidate their power in the land of the Marathas and depriving the latter of the territories which their genius and valor had secured them. In Gangadhar Shastri the English found a fit instrument to carry on their designs and give effect to their schemes. The author of the *Baroda Gazetteer*, Mr. F. A. H. Elliot, thus writes of this Brahmin :

"His (Gangadhar Shastree's) usefulness was already well-known to the Honorable Company and he rapidly acquired the confidence of a strong party in the Darbar headed by Babaji and afterwards by Fatehshing, till, at last, feared or respected by the British and the courts of Poona and Baroda, the Shastree came to play the most important part in the history of Baroda." (P. 209)

The same author also informs us that Gangadhar Shastri, "accompanying Major A. Walker to Baroda, entered the government service of the British in 1802. In June 1803, the village of Dendole in the *pargana* of Chorasi in the Surat *atthavisi* was granted him and his heirs in perpetuity. It was worth 5000 rupees per annum.....

"On the 12th of January 1805, on his daughter's marriage, the Bombay Government presented him with Rs. 4000. On the 15th of May, 1806, a palanquin was given him with allowance of Rs. 1200 a year for its maintenance (p. 210, f. n.).

The close-fisted English must have derived great material advantages through the instrumentality of this man which led them to confer on him all these honours and favours.\*

\* The East India Company's Government was indebted to him for his bringing the Baroda State

Naturally this man was looked upon by the Peshwa and many of the dignitaries and nobles of Baroda as a traitor, ready to sell his countrymen and sacrifice their interests in order to gain the smile of, and curry favour with, the English. The Peshwa strongly objected to his appointment, but, as said before, Elphinstone turned a deaf ear to his protests. Nay, Elphinstone went a step further. Knowing the unpopularity of Gangadhar Shastri at Baroda and the enemies that he had created by his overbearing manner, Elphinstone had ample reasons to fear that the life of his protege would not be safe in the Deccan. Gangadhar Shastri himself was unwilling to move out of Baroda, for somehow or other he had some premonition of the danger that was to befall him. Under the circumstances, he should not have been forced to go to Puna as the Gaekwar's agent. But without the Peshwa's knowledge, Elphinstone gave a formal guarantee for the Shastri's safety from the British Government. This conduct of Elphinstone highly offended the Peshwa, who had also several other well-founded reasons to be dissatisfied with the manner in which he was being treated by the English. He was supposed to be their ally, but he was not treated as such. He was the sovereign of Kathiawad, but the English conducted the war in that province without his sanction, and inflicted fines on Navanagar and Junagad of which he had not been officially apprised, and above all, of the settlement made by Colonel Walker, which was an undoubted infringement of the Peshwa's suzerainty.

Gangadhar Shastri set out from Baroda on the 19th of October 1813, and on his arrival in Puna Baji Rao refused to see him. But knowing that he was in the good books of the English, and he was their protege and under their protection in Puna, he commenced a career of intrigues having for their object the ruin and downfall of the Peshwa.

Mention has already been made above of Kharshedji Modi. He was the confidential servant of Sir Barry Close, but he was deprived of authority by Elphinstone. He was still in Puna when Gangadhar Shastri arrived there. This Brahman upstart, knowing

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under the supremacy of that Government. When Govind Rao Gaekwar died in September, 1800, he was succeeded by his son, Anand Rao, who "was a thorough simpleton, and had the misfortune to have left to him as legacy from his father a mutinous rabble of an army. This rabble mainly consisted of Arabs...Raojee Appajee, on Anand Rao's part—who, though a simpleton, had sense enough to feel the galling sway of the Arab Jamadars, opened negotiations with the English,... These negotiations were first carried on secretly, until the time that the Honorable Jonathan Duncan, Governor of Bombay, could convince himself that they were earnest on the part of Anand Rao. Then, although prepared with an expeditionary force to back the Gaekwar against Mulhar Rao (one of his family then in arms) and the mutineer Arabs as well as the British officer deputed to his Court, the Honorable Jonathan Duncan instructed Major Alexander Walker, the officer he had selected for the service, to go and judge of the state of matters at Baroda, before joining the force he was to command at Bombay, the place of rendezvous. In obedience to the orders of the Governor, Major Alexander Walker set out for Baroda, and was accompanied on his way thither by Gangadhar Shastree, "who has exercised no uncommon influence over the modelling of the events which led to the establishment of English supremacy in the Baroda Darbar, and the subsequent history of Guzerat and the Deccan." (Pp. 6—8 *History of the Rise, Decline and Present State of the Shastree Family, published in 1868 from Bombay*).

that Kharsedji was not in the good books of Elphinstone, left no stone unturned to poison his mind against that Parsi. We are told that—

"In May (1814), the Shastri requested (Mr. Elphinstone) that one man might be either removed from office or wholly trusted. This was Kharsedji Modi, whom the Shastri suspected of. . . . working with Trimbakji to influence the Peshwa by keeping him in a state of alarm as to the designs of Fatesing and the British."<sup>\*</sup>

The manner in which Kharsedji was ordered to leave Puna and his subsequent fate have already been narrated. But no sensible man can have any reason to doubt that this Parsi met his death at the hands of some of the numerous emissaries of the Puna Resident, Mountstuart Elphinstone.

The mission with which Gangadhar Shastri was charged, did not consist merely in settling the pecuniary claims of the Peshwa on the Gaekwar, but also to secure the lease of the Ahmedabad farm of his master. It has been said before that half of Gujrat belonged to the Gaekwar and the other half to the Peshwa. The Peshwa's share in Gujrat had been leased to the Gaekwar. The terms of the lease were now approaching their close. The Peshwa was unwilling to grant the lease to the Gaekwar, but the British Government wished that the farm of Ahmedabad should be retained by the Gaekwar. We are told on official authority that—

"The Peshwa very sensibly feared that if he continued to grant long leases of the Ahmedabad farm to the Guicowar, the renewal of them would at length come to be a matter of course and that Ahmedabad would in fact lapse into a mere tributary province. . . . The retention by the Guicowar of the farm of Ahmedabad was anxiously desired by the Bombay Government, whose boundaries touched it at many points and *it was important to thwart every attempt of Baji Rao to create fresh political ties between the courts of Baroda and Puna.*"<sup>†</sup>

From the words put in italics in the above extract it will be observed that the British Government had been intriguing against the Peshwa. The Peshwa had every right to farm out his share of Gujrat to whomsoever he liked. But it was just what did not suit the convenience of the Bombay Government of the day, and hence Elphinstone surrounded the Peshwa with spies, and it is not improbable that he employed a large number of intriguers to create troubles in the Peshwa's territories. Well, he was acting on a Machiavellian policy, for political expediency dictated him to do so. This Gangadhar Shastri was a fit instrument in Elphinstone's hand to carry out all his intrigues. Elphinstone himself has left a description of the Shastri which shows what sort of man this Brahman upstart was. He describes

"Gangadhar Shastri as a person of great shrewdness and talent who keeps the whole state of Baroda in the highest order, at Poona, lavishes money and marshals suwary in such style as to draw the attention of the whole place. Though a very learned Shastri he affects to be quite an Englishman, talks fast, interrupts and contradicts, and calls the Peshwa and his ministers old fools and 'damned rascals' or rather 'dam rascals'."<sup>‡</sup>

Knowing the sentiments of Gangadhar towards the Peshwa and his ministers, a sense of prudence should have told Elphinstone to remove the Shastri as soon as

<sup>\*</sup> *Baroda Gazetteer*, p. 219.

<sup>†</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.

<sup>‡</sup> Colcl Brooke's *Elphinstone*, I, 276.

possible from Puna. But the tragical drama would not have been unfolded had Elphinstone been a little prudent in all his dealings with the Peshwa. Nay, it was the interest of Elphinstone to keep the Shastri in Puna, because the latter was serving as his tool and playing the part of a spy on the Peshwa. The person of an ambassador is held sacred according to canons of the International Law of Nations of the civilized world. But it is also a well-known maxim of International Law that the lives of spies and emissaries should not be spared. Since his arrival in Puna Gangadhar Shastri had done his best to create ill feeling between the Peshwa and the English, and he richly deserved the fate which subsequently befell him. There can be no doubt to any reasonable man that Elphinstone gave the formal guarantee for the Shastri's safety from the British Government, knowing the part which that Brahmin upstart had to play and for which International Law prescribes one penalty only, namely, forfeiture of life. Ambassadors and diplomatists are supposed to possess a great deal of that undefinable thing called tact and to act on Tallyrand's saying that language is given unto us to conceal our thoughts. But this Brahman upstart sadly lacked the one and never acted on the other. The manner in which he indulged in vituperation of the Peshwa and his ministers shows how utterly unfit he was for the mission with which he was charged to Puna.

Gangadhar Shastri being known to be a dangerous man, it was the interest of the Peshwa to either conciliate, or if possible, annihilate him. Months passed, and yet the objects for which he was sent to Puna were not accomplished. The lease of the Ahmedabad farm was not renewed in favour of the Gaekwar but given to Trimbakji Dangle, said to have been a great favourite of the Peshwa. When he found the lease of the much coveted Ahmedabad farm was given to another man and not his master, he thought his stay any longer in Puna was useless and so also thought the Gaekwar and the British Government. Accordingly Gangadhar Shastri was ordered to quit Puna and to return to Baroda.

But, as said before, he was a dangerous man and the Peshwa and all his well-wishers tried to buy him off, if possible. Trimbakji Dangle, 'reputed to be the greatest favourite of the Peshwa, tried his best to effect reconciliation between his master and Gangadhar. We are told by the author of the *Bombay Gazetteer*, Baroda volume, Mr. F. A. H. Eliot, that

"Trimbakji Dangle, very probably at this time really intended a reconciliation. He is said to have confessed to the Shastri that he had at one time during the negotiation intended to murder him.""

Now, if his confession be at all true, then nothing short of lunacy and madness would have prompted him to commit the dastardly deed with which, as we shall presently see, he was charged.

In the eyes of the Peshwa, the Shastri's friendship and good-will appeared so important that he left no stone unturned to secure them. But as he was such an important tool in the hands of the English, they were equally determined that he should not be bought over by the Peshwa. The latter offered the Shastri the post of

his minister, but we are told that "this offer the Shastri rejected at the desire of Elphinstone."

The Peshwa made a proposal that the Shastri's son should be married to his sister-in-law. The Shastri agreed to this proposal and accordingly preparations for its celebration were being made at Nasik, where it was to take place. But almost at the eleventh hour, when the preparations were well advanced, the Shastri, without assigning any cause, broke off the marriage contract. Happily for him the law of breach of promise of marriage of the Christian countries of the West is not applicable to India, otherwise he would have had to pay a very large sum of money in damages. The Shastri also prevented his wife from visiting the Peshwa's palace. Of course, no English writers have given or even tried to give any explanation for these unusual steps, which the Shastri adopted; but there can be no doubt to any reasonable man that, in all probability, he was ordered to do so by the Resident at Puna, that is, Elphinstone. Not cordiality but estrangement of feeling between the Puna and Baroda governments was the object aimed at by the British Government, and this the latter did not even conceal. The scandalous manner in which the Shastri was behaving towards the Peshwa was enough to have enraged any one, but to the latter's credit it must be said that he took all these things very calmly.

Although the Ahmedabad farm was not again leased out to the Gaekwar, it would seem that Gangadhar Shastri tried to settle the pecuniary claims of the Peshwa on his master in a manner which was agreeable to the Brahman chief. The Shastri

"granted that the sum of 39 lakhs with interest on the same, was owing to the Gaekwar, and in lieu of all claims, which were then laid by the Peishwa at one crore of arrears and 40 lakhs of tribute, he proposed to surrender territory worth 7 lakhs. At the same time he apprehended that Fatesing would never part with so large a portion of his territory, and prayed the Resident to assist him in influencing the Baroda Court."\*

Had the British Government carried out the prayer of the Shastri, all the differences between the Peshwa and the Gaekwar would have been settled. But it was not their policy to do so. Fate Sing Gaekwar did not like the arrangement, and months passed without his vouchsafing any reply to his agent, *i.e.*, the Shastri at Puna. This arrangement was favourable to the Peshwa. It would seem that the British Government did not take any step to settle it, for, in the words of Colonel Wallace, the Peshwa at this time was "growing daily more and more the object of suspicion" of the English. Naturally, Gangadhar Shastri was alarmed at the position of affairs. To quote again the above-named English author:

"The first shock to Gangadhar Shastree's already insecure position was given by the silence of his government respecting the arrangement which he had taken upon himself to propose to the Peishwa as a solution of existing difficulties, and to which the Peishwa had verbally consented. He saw he had authorised the suspicion that he had neglected his master's interests in forwarding his own. To lose the favour of his own prince and to be found fraternizing with one growing daily more and more the object of suspicion to his still more powerful patrons the English!! The dilemma was awful!"†

\* *Baroda Gazetteer*, p. 221.

† P. 200 of Wallace's *History of the Guicowars*.

Had the British Government raised their little finger at his time, all the difficulties would have been easily smoothed over and the settlement of the Peishwa's claims effected. But, as said before, it was not their policy to do so.

Gangadhar Shastri, too, had he been a wise man, would not have stayed a day longer in Puna, seeing the turn which affairs had taken. He was sent to Puna as the Gackwar's agent and as such he had full powers to settle the affairs of his master. But his master did not agree to his arrangement. What more service could he have rendered to his master by his stay in the capital of the Peshwas? At the bidding of the English Resident at Puna, he sacrificed his own interests, for he had to reject the Peshwa's offer of the post of his minister and to break off the intended nuptials of his son with the Peshwa's sister-in-law.

But he still stayed in Puna, for according to Colonel Wallace,

"He hoped to conciliate Jaji Rao, and yet to retain the good opinion of his English patrons on whose guarantee for his safety, from long observations of its efficacy in Gujrat, he was disposed to place too entire a confidence."\*

To make a long story short, he accompanied the Peshwa to Pandharpur, where he was assassinated on the 14th July, 1815. The assassination has been attributed to the instigation of the Peshwa. It is alleged that the Peshwa's favourite, Trimbakji Danglia, hired assassins to do the job for he was directed by his master to do so.†

\* *Ibid.*, p. 207.

† Fateh Singh Gaekwar was the reigning prince at Baroda when Gangadhar Shastri was assassinated. He invited to Baroda the three sons of the deceased, who were at that time at Puna and settled princely allowances on them by means of a *Sunad*, which, however, did not receive the guarantee of the British Government. Fateh Singh's successor, Sayaji Rao, reduced their allowances, on which they appealed to the Bombay Government, at the head of which was at that time Elphinstone. He "did not ask the reason of the appeal and by whose negligence it was that the guarantee was not extended to the family which had indirectly been the cause of his release from the Residency duties at Poona, and elevation to the Bombay Governorship, but summarily decided that, as they could show no guarantee from the British Government, he believed his Government had no right to interfere, except by simple advice or recommendation." (Pp. 41-42 of *History of the Rise, Decline and Present State of the Shastree Family*.)

What idea of gratitude was possessed by Elphinstone!

How the murder of Gangadhar Shastri was beneficial to the British is thus narrated by Prinsep:

"In the issue to which matters were brought by the Shastree's murder, we stood forth in the character of avengers of the death of a Brahmin ambassador, and had the full advantage of the popular voice on our side, even among the Peishwa's own subjects. This favourable impression lasted beyond the immediate occasion, insomuch that two years afterwards, when a rupture occurred with nearly all the Maratha states, the cause of the British nation derived a vast accession of strength in public opinion from recollection of the foul murder of this Brahmin, in which the quarrel had originated, and the indifference manifested upon the subsequent down-fall of the Peishwa's dynasty was owing in a great measure to its being regarded as a judgment on the reigning head of the family for his participation in this crime, polluted as he was already by the yet unexpiated murder of Narayan Rao by his father, Raghunath. (P. 321, Vol. I of Prinsep's *History of the Political and Military Transactions*).



It is difficult to connect Baji Rao or his favourite Trimbakji with this cowardly and dastardly act. What motive or motives could have prompted them to commit the murder? Of course, Gangadhar Shastri was a vain, dangerous man and played the spy on the Peshwa, and, by causing Kharsedji Modi to be removed from Puna, severely wounded the feelings of Baji Rao. As a spy he richly deserved the fate which befell him and for which no reasonable man should sympathize with him. But had the Peshwa been bent upon taking his life, he could have done it very easily at Puna and not at Pandharpur, the sanctity of which alone would have prevented a superstitious man like the Peshwa from committing such a foul deed. The author of the *Bombay Gazetteer*, Puna volume, writes that Baji Rao

"claimed great holiness and was most careful to keep all religious rules and ceremonies. Apparently, to lay the ghost of Narayan Rao Peishwa, whom his parents had murdered and who seems to have haunted him, Baji Rao planted several hundred thousand mango trees about Poona, gave largesses to Brahmans and religious establishments, and was particularly generous to Vitioba's temple at Pandharpore."<sup>\*</sup>

In a foot-note to the above the same author writes:—"It was probably Narayan Rao's ghost that so often took him to Pandharpore." Now, when to propitiate one ghost, Baji Rao was taking all these troubles at Pandharpur, it is a psychological puzzle to understand, much less to believe, that at the same place this very superstitious Baji Rao should even think of perpetrating a crime similar to that of his parent. When he was taking all these measures to free his father of his sin, does it stand to reason, that he himself should stain his hands with the same sort of sin?

It may be argued that Gangadhar Shastri had offended Baji Rao by breaking off the intended nuptials of his son with the latter's sister-in-law and preventing his wife from visiting the Peshwa's palace. It does not seem that Baji Rao was enraged at this conduct of that Brahman upstart, or thought of depriving him of his life for this strange behavior of his. Of course, there was a time when the Peshwa would have been fully justified in taking the life of Gangadhar Shastri when the latter was playing the part of a spy on him and was intriguing with the English against him. But latterly, Gangadhar was reconciled to the Peshwa. His arrangement about the settlement of the pecuniary claims of Baji Rao on the Gaekwar was favorable to the Peshwa and it is not likely that the latter should have conspired to assassinate him for his useful services.

It is equally improbable that Trimbakji Dangle should have had any hand in the murder of the Shastri. What motive could have actuated him to perpetrate this foul deed? It is said that Trimbakji subsequently confessed that he had done the deed by the order of his master. Now, it is a well-known thing that those who confess either overdo a thing or underdo it. They never tell the truth. We have only to turn even to the confessions of Rousseau. No sensible man now places any reliance on the sensational confessions of Rousseau.

Even if Trimbakji did not confess in the spirit of bravado, we should not forget how confessions are sometimes extorted in India by the police and other administrators

<sup>\*</sup> Part II, p. 298.

of so-called justice. It is a matter of everyday occurrence in India, how the innocent are made to confess. So the confession of Trimbakji that he had done the deed is not worth much and that he did it by the order of his master is highly improbable for the reason set forth above.

Gangadhar Shastri, as said above, had made many enemies in Baroda and he was highly unpopular there. When Elphinstone guaranteed his safety in the Peshwa's territories, some of his enemies came to the Deccan, it would seem, with the avowed object of murdering him, for they knew that the Peshwa being not in the good books of the English, all the blame would fall on him and they themselves would go scot-free\*

\* Elphinstone had guaranteed safe conduct to the Shastri: but he never took any trouble to protect his person. He should have furnished the Shastri with an escort to accompany him everywhere he went. Strange to say that, while the Shastri went to Pandharpur with the Peshwa, Elphinstone did not take any precautionary measure to protect his protegee but went on a pleasant excursion to Ellora. His biographer writes that "Mr. Elphinstone took advantage of the opportunity to enter on another exploring expedition, this to the far-famed caves of Ellora."

The Shastri was murdered during Elphinstone's absence at Ellora.

Edward Moor, well-known as the author of *The Hindu Pantheon*, towards the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century served in Puna under Sir Charles Malet, the British Resident in the court of the Peshwa. He was well acquainted with the last Peshwa Baji Rao. In his above-mentioned work, he refers to the horror in which the murder of Brahmins was held by the subjects of his Brahman Government. He quotes the following verses from Manu:

"A twice-born man who barely assaults a Brahman with intention to hurt him, shall be whirled about for a century in the hell called *Tamisra*."

"He who, through ignorance of the law, sheds blood from the body of a Brahman, not engaged in battle, shall feel excessive pain in his future life."

"As many particles of dust as the blood shall roll up from the ground, for so many years shall the shedder of that blood be mangled by other animals in his next birth."

"Never shall the king slay a Brahman, though convicted of all possible crimes: let him banish the offender from his realm, but with all his property secure, and his body unhurt."

"No greater crime is known on earth than slaying a Brahman and the king, therefore, must not even form in his mind the idea of killing a priest."

From his long experience of and residence in Puna, Mr. Moor could give only three instances of Brahmins being put to death. He writes:

"The violent death of one of these persons, transcendently divine, as they are deemed by Manu, it may be supposed, rarely occurs. I have, however, known of three being put to death, and that too at Puna, the immediate seat of Brahmanical government . . . ."

Of these three the first was that of the notorious Ghasiram Kotwal. It cannot be denied that that man deserved the death that befell him. However, it should not be forgotten that he was stoned to death by Brahmins of the *Telinga* sect. After narrating the circumstances of the murder of this Brahman, Moor truly observes:

"I have heard it said and have, I think, seen it related that on such an occasion (that, however, of popular insurrection, is very uncommon in India,) the victim has been put in a bag, and beaten, to avoid the denunciation against shedding a Brahman's blood."

The second and the third instances of Brahmanicide mentioned by Moor, need not be referred to here.

These instances are cited to show the horror in which Brahmanicide was regarded during the regime of the Peshwas. The Peshwa, Baji Rao, was well-versed in the Shastras of the Hindus and

At the time when the Shastri was murdered, there were two agents of Sitaram Rowjee there. The grudge which Sitaram bore to the Shastri is well-known. It is also said that

"The Shastri had in his possession a letter addressed by Govindrao to the Rani Takhtibai which contained the ominous threat that under certain contingencies the Shastree will never more look that way, that is, return to Baroda."

If this be true then there can be no doubt that the Shastri's murder was planned and carried out by some of the numerous enemies he had made at Baroda.

But Elphinstone was determined to connect the Peshwa and his favorite, Trimbakji Danglia, with this murder. He is said to have held an investigation and proved that Danglia had engaged the assassins. What sort of investigation it was, and whether the accused Trimbakji had been given an opportunity to know the nature of the investigation, are matters which are not mentioned in official records. Trimbakji was an eyesore to Elphinstone and the English, because he was a favorite of the Peshwa. That in itself would not have been a great offence, had it not been for the other fact that he had been granted the lease of the much-coveted Ahmadabad farm. It has been already mentioned before, how desirous were the English to see the lease of that farm renewed in favor of their protege the Gaekwar. But when the Peshwa did not do so, they were determined on his humiliation and subsequent ruin.

It was then, we take it, a matter of political expediency to have connected the Peshwa and his favorite Trimbakji with the murder of Gangadhar Shastri. For the present it was decided not to consider the Peshwa as a party to the murder. But Elphinstone demanded of the Peshwa the surrender of his favorite Trimbakji to the English. Now, this demand on the part of Elphinstone was against the spirit of all International Law. Even assuming for the sake of argument that Trimbakji was implicated in the murder of Gangadhar Shastri, it does not follow that the English had any right to punish him. Both Trimbakji and the murdered were, as it were, the subjects of the Peshwa and so the latter had every authority to deal with the accused as he thought proper. The demands of justice would have been fully satisfied by punishing these Baroda agents, who had been caught, as it were, red-handed in the murder of the Shastri. But Elphinstone had ulterior designs in demanding the surrender of Trimbakji.†

besides he was a very superstitious man. Taking all these facts into consideration, it is extremely improbable that Baji Rao ordered, or Trimbakji Danglia executed, the murder of the Brahman ambassador.

\* *Baroda Gazetteer*, p. 222.

† In his letter to the Marquess of Hastings, Elphinstone set forth his reasons for demanding the immediate surrender of Trimbakji. He wrote :

"If Trimbakji expected to be accused by our government, . . . he would probably have employed the interval in perverting the Peshwa's mind and engaging him in acts of violence at home, and in such foreign negotiations as are inconsistent with the alliance. This would be facilitated by the Peshwa remaining so long in suspense whether the accusation might not be directed against himself."

Thus it was political expediency which dictated Elphinstone to accuse Trimbakji of the murder without any proof, because Trimbakji was an able, ambitious and hence a dangerous man whose removal from Puna was desirable at any cost.

He did not care much whether the step he was going to take would wound the feelings of the Peshwa, whose sworn enemy he was. Baji Rao, as in honor bound, resisted Elphinstone's demand. But Elphinstone was inexorable. He was about to surround Puna with British troops and lay a regular siege to it.

How bitterly at this moment Baji Rao must have rued the day he signed the treaty of Bassein and entered into alliance with the English, who were not remarkable for faithfulness. Naturally of a timid disposition and, as said before, false to himself and false to the people over whom he ruled, Baji Rao's heart failed him when he found his capital was to be besieged by the British troops. He was obliged to make over his favorite Trimbakji to the English. The English incarcerated Trimbakji in the Thana Fort.

Thus by fraud and force, Elphinstone succeeded in depriving Baji Rao of two of his best well-wishers and faithful servants, viz., Kharsedji Modi and Trimbakji Danglia. Baji Rao's eyes were now opened. There is a proverb that even a worm would turn round and bite. Though timid and false to himself, the humiliation to which he had been subjected was enough to make him seek for vengeance on his British persecutors. The British Government was at this time engaged in war with Nepal. The reverses which the British troops suffered in that war must have made Baji Rao very jubilant and it is not at all unlikely that at this time he intrigued with other Maratha princes to concert measures to throw off the yoke of the English, which was so galling to him.

After the murder of Gangadhar Shastri there was a discussion for the settlement of the Peshwa's claims on the Gaekwar. But all these discussions ended in smoke. The Gaekwar, probably at the dictation of the English, did not accept the settlement which the Shastri had made. Seeing that no settlement had been arrived at between the

At the time when it pleased Elphinstone to accuse Trimbakji of the murder, he had no evidence worth speaking of against that unfortunate Maratha minister. It was after the flight of the Peshwa and the annexation of his territories that strong evidence is alleged to have been obtained by Elphinstone and the English to satisfy them that the Peshwa and Trimbakji planned the murder. Colebrooke, in his *Life of Elphinstone*, writes :

"There is no part of Indian History on which so full a light has been thrown, as the murder of the unfortunate Shastri, and the important events which followed. Our subsequent conquest of the country gave us sources of information which were improved by the local inquiries of Grant Duff, and we can trace the undercurrent of intrigue by the light of subsequent knowledge, and *with the aid that Mr. Elphinstone did not at the time possess.*" (The italics are ours.)

Of course, after the conquest, everything was possible. To curry favour with the victorious English, numbers of blackguards and intriguers of the type of Balaji Pant Natu came forward to give, nay, fabricate, false evidence against the fallen Peshwa and his minister. No reliance could be placed on such evidence.

That Trimbakji was not altogether a bad man is admitted even by Elphinstone himself. On May 8th, 1815, Elphinstone wrote in his diary :

"It is pleasant to see Trimbakji remember old friends and townsmen in his elevation, and this, with his care of his native village, building walls to it, etc., incline one to think well of him, *if his general character would admit of it.*" (The italics are ours.)

Of course, Elphinstone was strongly biased against Trimbakji and therefore, inspite of all the benevolent and charitable acts of Trimbakji, which he saw with his own eyes, he was not inclined to think well of him.

Peshwa and the Gaekwar, it was the duty of the English to have acted as arbitrators and mediators, but this is exactly what they did not like to do; for had they done so, they would not have got a pretext, a handle, to deprive the Peshwa of his territories or to go to war with him.

Elphinstone and the British Government complained of Baji Rao's conduct, because he asserted that he had the right to nominate the Gaekwar's Diwan and also of enquiring into the Gaekwar's domestic concerns. In fact, Baji Rao looked upon the Gaekwar as his feudatory.

"This policy of the Peishwa met with the strong disapproval of the British Government, who considered that the only power left to the Peishwa of all his old connections with the Guicowar was that of granting investiture to the legal successor to the Baroda Gadi."\*

The British Government was not going to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Peshwa over the Gaekwar, for it considered that the Peshwa had lost his right by the Treaty of Bassein. To the Peshwa's mind this point was not so very clear and decisive for we are told by Colonel Wallace (p. 207) that

"the assistance given to the Guicowar by the Honorable Company had been timely, and it had been efficacious, but none was deceived into the idea that it had been disinterested or gratuitous. The Guicowar state had been the utensil of the Honorable Company, it had been embraced as an ally when required, and dismissed when no longer wanted, treaties had been made respecting it, in which it was not consulted, treaties had been made with it which had been abrogated when it suited the Company's convenience, *sometimes it had been induced to wage war with the Peishwa as an independent state and then again, on the return of peace, it had been acknowledged as a vassal merely of the Maratha Empire, thus its external policy had been altogether dictated.*"

From the words put in italics in the above extract it is obvious how uncertain were the relations between the Peshwa and the Gaekwar. We cannot find fault with the Peshwa for trying to clearly define his connections with the Gaekwar.

But it was not the policy of the British Government to help the Peshwa now in any way in their power. They took no steps to settle his claims on the Gaekwar or clearly define his relations with him.

The course which the British Government now adopted towards the Peshwa must be admitted by all candid historians to be nothing short of treachery. The war with Nepal was now over, and so the British had time now to turn to other affairs. The Marquis of Hastings considered the Peshwa an easy game, and so he decided that the British arms should be turned against him. All the benefits which the British had obtained by their connection with him were now forgotten, and as he was no longer of any use to them, so he should be sacrificed now to gratify their ambition.

The territorial revenue of the Bombay Presidency was not at this time enough to support its civil, marine, and military establishments. All the costly establishments of the English, who had been always seeking ways and means to make themselves rich at the expense of the natives of this country, required money to fill the pockets of their employees. The provinces which formed the satrapy of the Peshwa were very

fertile and the revenue which the Peshwa derived from these provinces amounted to a crore and a half of rupees every year. The eyes of the worldly-minded, ambitious English naturally turned to them. Perhaps this might account for their not trying to compose the differences between the Peshwa and the Gaekwar and always trying to find a pretext for a quarrel with Baji Rao, through whose instrumentality they had so enormously benefited.

The English made every preparation for going to war with the Peshwa.

"On the 7th of April 1817, Lord Moira warned Sir Evan Napier that war between the British and the Peshwa was imminent...and that he was to hold himself in readiness, to seize the Peshwa's portion of Gujrat and the Northern portion of the Konkan."\*

Thus it was not the Peshwa but the English, who wanted war. And if the Peshwa was found to make warlike preparations, we cannot blame him, for knowing the sentiments of the English towards him, and seeing their preparations for war, Baji Rao naturally, as a precautionary measure and in self-defence, tried to amass troops.† But no one could overreach the English diplomatists because of their wonderful capacity for intrigues. Elphinstone's capacity for intrigues was notorious.

\* *Bombay Gazetteer*, Baroda volume, page 225.

† If we are to believe the testimony of two English officers, it would seem that it was never the intention of Baji Rao to go to war with the English. This will be evident from the following extract from a paper of Lieut. General Briggs published by Colebrooke in his *Life of Elphinstone* :

"The doctor, who was in the habit of passing an hour every day with Mr. Elphinstone reading Greek and Italian, was supposed to be in his (Peshwa's) confidence, though he was only treated as a common friend. The Peshwa begged that the doctor might be sent to attend some members of his family, and the kindness that he there received, and the manner in which the Peshwa spoke of his fidelity and attachment to the English deceived the doctor till the day when the war was declared. In the same manner he gained over the services of the English commandant of the contingent, who, to the last hour, professed to believe that the Peshwa would never make war with us."

The following account penned by General Briggs shows the feelings of gratitude which the Peshwa entertained for the British. General John Briggs writes :

".....At length, one day it was in April 1817 the Peshwa sent a message by his Minister that he desired to see Mr. Elphinstone, to confer on state affairs.

.....On the arrival of Mr. Elphinstone and suit, the Peshwa was found sitting in a small private apartment, from which, after the usual compliments, he dismissed the attendants, and said, 'I have requested this meeting, Mr. Elphinstone, to endeavour to disabuse your mind of some injurious impressions you seem to have formed as to my feelings and intentions towards your Government. Remember that I have been connected with you from my childhood. Let me go back to the time when a cabal united against my father, now in heaven, on the death of his nephew, who was assassinated by his own guards in his palace, and when he, the next heir, came forward to claim his rights, you are aware how he was persecuted, and driven by the rebellious nobles out of his country. At the crisis there were the great chiefs, Holkar and Scindia and Gaekwar, to whom it would have been natural for him to apply for aid against his own subjects, but he passed them by, and placed himself under the protection of the British Government and made a treaty with it. Scarcely had I reached the age of manhood when an accident left the Masnud again vacant, and my enemies deprived me of my claim of succession. Your Government interfered, and I eventually obtained my rights. But my opponents were too strong, and, having marched an army to Poona, defeated my troops. I fled, not to seek assistance from my

The chief among the intriguers whom Elphinstone looked upon as his friends and on whose information he acted was Balaji Pant Natu, a name which should be held in detestation by every Indian. His conduct was fully exposed to the world by the agent of the deposed Raja of Satara, Rango Bapuji. Balaji Pant Natu was capable of every dishonest and mean act in order to curry favour with the English. And yet he was the confidential friend of Elphinstone, who followed his advice and acted on his information.\*

countrymen, but from the English at Bombay, and by your armies I was restored to my capital and my throne. How can you believe that, with all this load of obligation to your Government, I should ever have a design to make war against it? My whole body, from my head to feet, has been nourished by the salt of the English. Look at the situation, however, from another point of view. I am not so ignorant of the history of British power in this country as not to know that whosoever has engaged in war with it has been defeated, and his sovereignty has passed away. In former times, when Hyder Ally, aided by the French, made war against the English, he could gain no ground, and it is said that on his death-bed he urged his son, Tippu Sultan, to keep at peace and to cultivate the friendship of the English. He was too proud and too confident. In two great wars, although assisted by the French, Tippu was beaten, his territories divided, and at last he was destroyed. Since my re-establishment at Poona, have I not witnessed the defeat of those regular troops of infantry and artillery, trained under European officers for the great Mahratta chiefs, Holkar and Sindia, who carried everything before them in Hindustan, but who when they ventured to oppose the English, were beaten time after time with heavy losses and eventually reduced to make peace at great sacrifices of territory and treasure? In my case, however, I ask where are the regular troops? Where are my infantry or my guns to cope with your enemies? Yet, I am suspected of desiring to engage in war against my best friends.'

"During the whole of this speech, which was delivered in his native tongue, Mahrattce, the Peshwa was perfectly cool, nor did he exhibit any symptoms either of agitation or resentment."

*Memoir of Jofin Briggs, pp. 44-45.*

\* Balaji Pant Natu was a menial employed on 5 or 6 rupees a month at Bhore in the Satara District. From Bhore he went to Puna and was in the service of the Rastia Sardars. These Sardars were not in the good graces of the Peshwa Baji Rao. Balaji Pant Natu was introduced into the British Residency at Puna as an agent of the Rastia Sardars. In that capacity he used to tell the successive British Residents, tales and fibs against the Peshwa, for he thought that by so doing he would further the cause of his masters, the Rastia Sardars. He so far ingratiated himself with Elphinstone that the latter looked upon him as his right-hand man, and depended upon him for all informations regarding the Peshwa and his doings.

After the overthrow of the Peshwa, Balaji Pant Natu was highly praised and recommended to the Governor-General of India by Elphinstone for the grant of a jaghire. In his letter to Mr. John Adam, Chief Secretary to Government, Fort William, dated camp at Corygaum, 5th September, 1818, Elphinstone wrote :

.....The services of Balaji Pant have been before brought to the notice of his Excellency the most noble the Governor-General, he has since conducted himself with exemplary fidelity notwithstanding the Peishwa's frequent attempts to corrupt him. His services were of the greatest use both during the war and the period which preceded it and he is at present employed under Captain Grant with the Raja of Satara, the most confidential situation held by any native in this part of the country. I therefore beg leave earnestly to recommend the villages mentioned in the enclosed should be confirmed to him by a regular Enam grant under the seal of the Governor-General or under mine by His Excellency's authority.

"His present salary is calculated on the principle of his receiving the pension formerly granted

Another confidential friend of Elphinstone was Yashvantrav Ghorepade. Regarding this man, the author of the Puna volume of the *Bombay Gazetteer* (part II, p. 299) writes :

"Yashvantrav Ghorepade, a friend of Mr Elphinstone and of many British officers, was at this time in disgrace with Mr. Elphinstone on account of some intrigues."

But Yashvantrav knew the royal road to favour with Elphinstone. The latter hated the Peshwa like anything and so any cock and bull story against Baji Rao would not only please Elphinstone but certainly secure his favour and good-will. So all the evidence of the so-called treachery of the Peshwa rests on Elphinstone's correspondence, who depended for information on such men as Balaji Pant Natu and Yashvantrav Ghorepade.

We have said before that Baji Rao's preparations were in their very nature indicatory of self-defence. Elphinstone, knowing that the English Government wanted to go to war with the Peshwa, made some extraordinary demands on him.\* Trimbakji Danglia had been confined at Tannah under the guard of British troops. But he escaped from his place of confinement and was again at large. It did not reflect much credit on the vigilance of the English, that one of their prisoners escaped from their prison without their knowing anything about it. Trimbakji was said to be in the Peshwa's territory. Without showing much respect or courtesy to the Peshwa, Elphinstone taxed him in a very offensive manner to deliver up Trimbakji, or war with the English must follow. He demanded

to him. I would therefore not recommend his pension being reduced in consequence of his new grant. It is indeed desirable to make the grant in a spirit of liberality, as it is the first reward yet made to any of our immediate dependants, and as the zeal with which we are served must depend on those rewards. The grant will of course be included in the one I have recommended for rewards to adherents."

Of course the Governor-General approved of the recommendation of Elphinstone. When the latter left India for good, he gave the following certificate to Balaji Pant Natu written with his own hand :

"Balaji Pant Natoo was connected with the Poona Residency from the time of Sir Barry Close in 1803 or 4. He entered into the residency employments about 1816 and in the troubles that followed and in the settlement of the country showed himself an able, zealous, and trustworthy public servant. He was my principal native agent during most of the time I was Commissioner in the Deccan, was consulted by me on all subjects and gave me every reason to be satisfied with his judgment and fidelity.

Bombay, 13th November, 1829.

(Sd.) M. Elphinstone."

\* How Elphinstone was anxious for the sight of a war will be evident from the following extract from his diary :

"Active employment, bodily or mental, here or in a camp, enlarging my knowledge, keeping awake my imagination, enterprising journeys, *the sight of a war if possible*, bustle at Calcutta, applause for zeal and energy—these must be the grand objects of my desires, and must not be longed for, but prized or worked for."

Again, under April 6th, 1817, he entered in his diary :

"I think a quarrel with the Peishwa desirable, and therefore look on everything with perfect security, except the prospect of undecided conduct on the part of Lord Moira. Even on the 31st I did not feel the slightest anxiety."



the surrender of Trimbakji within a month and the immediate delivery of the three hill forts of Sinhgad, Purandhar and Raigad as a pledge that Trimbakji would be surrendered.\* Elphinstone was going to invest Puna with British troops, when on the 8th May, 1817, Baji Rao issued an order for the surrender of the three hill forts. With the humiliation inflicted on the Peshwa, one would have thought that the English would have been quite content. But the English were quite prepared for the war. So to add insult to injury, the Brahman chief was obliged to sign the treaty known as Treaty of Puna, dated the 13th June, 1817. This was forced on him in a manner which he could not resist. The English wanted a pretext for this new treaty and so it was alleged to be necessary as a compensation for the murder of Gangadhar Shastri. Two years had elapsed since the murder of that Brahman ambassador, and it would be remembered that it was convenient for the English Government to affect to believe that the Peshwa was not a party to the murder. But circumstances had now altered, and so the English raked up the old matter and made the Peshwa confess at the point of the bayonet that he had a hand in the murder of Gangadhar Shastri. The Peshwa

\* Trimbakji was confined a prisoner in Chunar fort, not far distant from Benares. Here he was visited by several European travellers, the most noted of whom was Bishop Heber, who saw him in September, 1824 and in his Indian journal writes that Trimbakji was "confined with great strictness, having an European as well as Sepoy guard, and never being trusted out of sight of the sentries. Even his bed-chamber has three grated windows open into the verandah, which serves as guard room . . . . . a little garden shaded with a peepul tree which he has planted very prettily with balsams and other flowers. Four of his own servants are allowed to attend him, but they are always searched before they quit or return to the fort, and must be always there at night. He is a little, lively, irritable looking man, dressed, when I saw him, in a dirty cotton mantle, with a broad red border thrown carelessly over his head and shoulders. . . . . He has been now, I believe, five years in prison and seems likely to remain there during life, or till the death of his patron and tool, Bajee Rao, may lessen his power of doing mischief. He has often offered to give security to any amount for his good behaviour. . . . . but his applications have been in vain. He attributes their failure to Mr. Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay, who is, he says . . . . . resolutely fixed on keeping him in prison and urging the supreme court to distrust all his protestations. His life must now be dismally monotonous and wearisome. Though a Brahmin of high caste and so long a minister of State, he can neither read nor write . . . ."

There can be little doubt that the harshness and rigour of his confinement undermined his health, for another European traveller, Major Archer, in visiting Chunar on February 16, 1829, wrote about him :

"His confinement has continued since 1818, but his term is nearly bounded by the great enemy, Death, his medical attendants declaring he cannot last many months. When we passed, his liver was so much affected as to protrude his side to the size of a half quartern loaf. His state was one of great emaciation, and he was a truly pitiable object. His prayer (and it was unheeded) was to be permitted to die at Benares, but the suspicions of the Government are too lively for this indulgence—no great one Trimbuck was a wicked monster, but the good accruing from allowing him to go loose, creating a favourable opinion of British generosity, would more than balance the chance of danger or inconvenience which such a measure might be thought to risk. The boon to an expiring man would, it is conceived, impress the natives with the notions that our mercy was equal to our power, and that generosity was nearly allied to our justice." Pp. 108-109, vol. II., *Tours in Upper India and in parts of the Himalayas mountains, with accounts of the native princes &c.*, by Major Arthur, late Aide-de-camp to Lord Combermere, London, 1833.

was a weak man and, as repeatedly said above, he was false to himself. To him power was sweet, and the friendship with the English was sweeter still. To maintain the show of authority and also the friendship of the English, he was ready to do anything. So there was not much difficulty for Elphinstone to extort the so-called confession of the murder of the Shastri from the Peshwa. Baji Rao did not possess that metal of which Pratap Singh, the Raja of Satara, was made. When the English charged the Raja of Satara with conspiring against them, the Raja was told that if he would sign a paper admitting his guilt, all differences then existing should fall into oblivion. It is well-known how the Raja lost his kingdom but did not sign that paper. The Raja was true to himself, which the Peshwa was not. For reasons already adduced before, it is impossible to believe that the Peshwa was guilty of the murder. But supposing that Baji Rao was a party to the murder, why were two years allowed to expire before any reparation was demanded of him?

By this new treaty of Puna, Baji Rao lost most of his fertile provinces, and his resources were seriously crippled. The British Government did not arbitrate to settle the pecuniary demands of the Peshwa on the Gaekwar, but by this treaty the Peshwa was made to part with his share of the revenue of Gujrat in settlement of all his claims on the Gaekwar. Of course, the English had all along an eye on the fertile provinces of Gujrat, and the Peshwa and Trimbakji Danglia incurred their displeasure because the lease of the Ahmadabad Farm was not renewed in favour of the Gaekwar but was given to Trimbakji.

The blow dealt to the Peshwa by this new Treaty was one from which it was difficult for him to recover. He was so much disgusted with all these transactions that he left Puna and went to Pandharpur and thence to Mahuli in the vicinity of Satara at the junction of the two rivers Krisna and Yena and hence a place regarded as sacred by all devout Hindus. It was at this place that he requested Malcolm to see him—a request which Malcolm complied with. Baji Rao complained of his crippled state under the Treaty of Puna and of the loss of the friendship of the English, and declared his longing to have the friendship renewed. Malcolm advised him to collect troops and send a contingent to the aid of the English in the coming war with the Pindaris. Kaye writes:

"When in August, Malcolm was importuned to visit him, he (Baji Rao) had appeared to be really sincere in the expression of his desire to stand fast by the British alliance, but he had then been much exasperated by recent transactions—an unwelcome treaty had been forced upon him and it was not difficult, in this frame of mind, to persuade him that the sovereignty of the Marhattas was threatened, and that his true interest lay in hostility to the British Government. So the troops that he had collected avowedly with the intention of aiding our operations, were now held together for the purpose of resisting them.

"Such a gathering of troops at Poonah could have but one result. A large body of ill-disciplined Mahratta soldiers were little likely, under any circumstances, to remain quiescent in the neighbourhood of the capital. It was necessary that they should commit excesses of some kind, and the temper which they manifested in the autumn of 1817 rendered certain the direction in which excesses would be committed. Their minds had been inflamed by false (?) representations of the hostile designs of

the British. They believed that their very existence, as a military body, was threatened and that there would soon be nothing but Company's service from one end of India to the other."<sup>\*</sup>

When such were the feelings of the Marathas in general against the English, we cannot reasonably blame Baji Rao for his inability to send any contingent to the aid of the English. Vengeance sleeps long, but it never dies. Baji Rao, though a weak man and false to himself, tried to get rid of the halter which had been tightened round his neck by the English. He was their prisoner and he tried to break out of the prison house. It is true, as observed by Kaye, that Baji Rao "had been much exasperated by the recent transactions." Seeing the faithlessness of the English, he could not easily believe that they had not some ulterior motives in requesting him to send a contingent of troops to their aid. What he probably suspected was that the English meditated treachery. By denuding his territories of troops, it would be an easy task for the English to force another unwelcome treaty on him and to further cripple his state. This thought was not unnatural for him to indulge in, seeing the treatment he had been subjected to.

His subjects also, seeing the state of affairs, cried loudly for war. The Peshwa was no military genius. He did not learn the lesson from the other Indian powers coming to grief by the employment of foreign Christian mercenaries in their armies. Those Christians were never faithful to those whose salt they had eaten. He had in his army such Christian officers. One of them was General Pott. When hostilities broke out, Baji Rao ordered him to fight the Christian British. He refused to obey his order, saying he would not fight against men of his colour, creed and country. Had Baji Rao been a prudent prince, he would have at once got him court-martialled and awarded him the capital punishment which he fully deserved. He had not the courage to do it. So the result was that not only General Pott and others of his co-religionists and men of his colour deserted, but also betrayed him.

But Bapu Gokhle pledged his honor and offered his service to lead the troops against the English. No British author has a word to say against this Maratha chief. He had no selfish motive to serve by siding with the Peshwa.

Bapu Gokhle was not an enemy of the English. The dispatches of the Duke of Wellington bear testimony to the assistance which he rendered to them. He was instrumental also to a certain extent in getting the Treaty of Bassein signed by the Peshwa. Taking all these facts into consideration, it cannot be said that he was a bitter enemy of the English. No, he was disgusted with the 'grasping policy' of the English and sincerely, believed that they were bent upon the destruction of the Maratha nation.

Bapu Gokhle was now appointed as the Peshwa's commander-in-chief. But Elphinstone was not idle. The exaggerated reports as to the Peshwa's doings and the

<sup>\*</sup> *Life and Correspondence of Sir John Malcolm*, Vol. II. p. 191.

In an official despatch, Elphinstone wrote:

"Openness and vigor of His Highness's preparations, joined, perhaps, with some pity for his losses and to some hope of the restoration of the Mahratta greatness, render His Highness's cause more popular than it used to be, . . . ." *Colebrooke's Life of Elphinstone*, I. 371.

lies as to his movements which emissaries and confidential friends like Balaji Pant Natu whispered into Elphinstone's ears led him to ask the British troops to come to his assistance at once.\* Two English commanders, General Smith and Colonel

\* From the procrastination and delay on the part of the Peshwa and his commander-in-chief it is not unreasonable to suppose that they did not seriously think of going to war with the English. They would have also in all probability sent the contingent to the aid of the English, but Elphinstone's doings provoked the war. His biographer, Sir T. E. Colebroke, writes:

"The cantonment had been placed in the immediate vicinity of the city by Sir Arthur Wellesley, with a view to its defence, but it was surrounded by enclosures, and owing to close proximity of the Peshwa's army, an attack might have been made without a moment's warning.....

"To withdraw the troops from their dangerous position was to provoke the hostility for which the court was preparing.....The precautionary step, however, admitted of no delay, and Mr. Elphinstone quietly intimated to the Peshwa that Sir Thomas Hislop's orders to move the troops to Kirkee would be acted upon immediately. Orders were sent to hasten the march of a European regiment from Bombay, and General Smith was requested to send back a light battalion to the cantonment at Siroor." (Vol. I. p. 373).

It does not appear from the official records that Elphinstone ever asked the Peshwa to send his contingent to the aid of the British; he never remonstrated with him for levying such a large number of troops. But on the contrary, we find Elphinstone himself making every preparation for war and thus provoked the Peshwa and the Mahrattas to go to war against the English. His biographer writes:

"On the afternoon of October 30th, the British battalion marched into the cantonment, and Mr. Elphinstone hesitated no longer to order the withdrawal of the whole force to a well-chosen position four miles from the city, an act which both parties understood as a preparation for war. This seasonable reinforcement, and the additional security we obtained by the position of the troops, put an end to the motives which made Mr. Elphinstone desire to anticipate hostilities, and he now calmly awaited the attack, knowing the moral importance which belongs to the fact of not appearing to be the aggressor in such a conflict." (Vol. I. p. 375).

Thus it is evident that Elphinstone did everything in his power to provoke the war.

The want of plan of campaign also shows that the Peshwa and his ministers never contemplated seriously to go to war with the English. Babu Gokhle was credited with possessing a thorough knowledge of the tactics of European warfare. Hence, had he strong and good grounds to believe that the Peshwa meant war with the English, it is not likely that he would have committed those fatal mistakes which cost him his life and the Peshwa his kingdom. In all probability he would have made his plan of campaign such as would have led him to success, victory and glory, had the Peshwa been determined on war with the English. The author of "Fifteen Years in India" writes:

Thoughtless, in reflecting upon what he saw and heard, was much at a loss to account for the conduct of the Peshwa, who, considering it a hopeless undertaking again to attack Colonel Burr, nevertheless remained near Poonah in a position backed by a chain of high hills, affording no retreat but through difficult passes, while an enemy, flushed with success and inflamed with resentment, was approaching to attack him. In short, Charles expected that the force would have been immediately led against the enemy, with the certainty of complete success, he inferred that the Peshwa had committed a fatal error by awaiting the junction of General Smith's division with that of Colonel Burr, and that after his failure at Kirkee, his real interests demanded a retreat from Poonah into the plains of the Deccan, where his numerous cavalry would have been useful in harassing a pursuing enemy and in keeping up the spirit of his confederates."

It seems that the Peshwa had no intention to go to war with the English, but seeing the threatening position of the English, there was no other alternative for him than to attack them without forming any definite plan of campaign.

Burr, came with their troops to Puna and on the 5th November 1817 was fought the memorable battle of Kirki, in which the Peshwa's troops were defeated. The Peshwa watched the battle from the celebrated Parvati Temple. The defeat did not cast any reflection on Bapu Gokhle's military skill: for not having worthy generals under him, he had to plan and conduct every movement of the troops. Besides there were traitors in his camp who not only supplied information to the Resident, Mr. Elphinstone, but did everything in their power to defeat Bapu Gokhle's undertaking. Moreover, his advice to attack the English before the junction of the troops under General Smith and Colonel Burr could take place, was not attended to. All these points satisfactorily account for the defeat of the Peshwa at Kirki. The author of "Fifteen Years in India," who was an officer and took part in the battle at Kirki, thus bears testimony to the high military skill possessed by Gokhle:

"Gokhle's men were individually brave and he was an experienced and able general, well acquainted with our tactics, for he had fought as an auxiliary under Sir Arthur Wellesley, and seen some of the most dashing service in India, but his troops being in a disorganised state, and without that mutual dependence upon each other which discipline ensures, he never could actuate them with his own brave spirit, and they invariably deserted him in the hour of trial."\*

The same author in another place of his work thus speaks of him:

"His (Gokhle's) person was large, his features fine and manly, and his complexion nearly fair.....It is impossible not to respect the spirit of Gokhle. The judgment with which he prepared to receive General Smith was only equalled by his valour and skill in bravely endeavouring to retrieve the day.....and the muse of history will encircle his name with a laurel for fidelity and devotion in his country's cause."†

After the battle of Kirki, the Peshwa left Puna as a fugitive, still at the head of a large army under the command of Bapu Gokhle. Several battles were still fought with varying fortunes so inseparable from war. But the death of his able commander-in-chief, Bapu Gokhle, seemed to have damped his spirit and there being no other general who could have properly taken his place, and he himself being of a timid nature and possessing no military training, the Peshwa was now anxious to sue for peace and accordingly he made overtures to Malcolm.

Elphinstone knew fully well how unpopular the English were in the Deccan and even the death and capture of the Peshwa would not crush their spirit of independence. The Marathas were not going to part with their liberty. To pacify them he commenced intriguing with the Raja of Satara.‡ That prince was at that time in the

\* *Fifteen Years in India: or Sketches of a Soldier's Life.* From the journal of an official in His Majesty's service. London, 1828. p. 492.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 304, 305.

‡ The manner in which, through the instrumentality of Balaji Pant Natu and by specious promises, Mr. Elphinstone succeeded in making the Raja of Satara desert the Peshwa has been described on the authority of documents in my *Story of Satara*, in which I have tried to expose the intrigues and conspiracies that had been resorted to by Elphinstone to bring about the downfall and defeat of the Peshwa. In no history of India written by European authors is there any mention of the Raja of Satara helping the English to restore tranquillity in the Deccan by his being made to issue the Proclamation to the inhabitants of the Maharashtra to disown the Peshwa and side

camp of the fugitive Peshwa. Mr. Elphinstone by means of his emissaries succeeded in getting hold of his person and used him as a trump card in this political game.

But the timid Baji Rao lost all heart to any longer resist the English. He made overtures to Malcolm, which were very favourably received, the reasons for which Malcolm thus wrote to the Chief Secretary to Government :

"The opportunities I have had of judging the state of feeling of every class, from the prince to the lowest inhabitant of this extensive empire, now and formerly subject to the Mahrattas, make me not hesitate in affirming that so far as both the fame of the British Government and the tranquility of India are concerned, the submission of Baji Rao and voluntary abdication of his power are objects far more desirable than either his captivity or death.....should he be slain, his fate would excite pity, and might stimulate ambition, as the discontented would probably, either now or hereafter, rally round a real or pretended heir to his high station. If he were made prisoner, sympathy would attend him and the enemies of the English Government would continue to cherish hopes of his one day effecting his escape. But if he dismisses his adherents, throws himself upon our generosity and voluntarily resigns his power, the effect, so far as general impression is concerned, will be complete, and none will be found to persist in defending a cause which the ruler himself has abandoned."\*

These considerations prompted Malcolm to obtain, as soon as possible, the voluntary submission of Baji Rao. He tempted Baji Rao with a large pension of eight lakhs of rupees a year. The bait was tempting to the Peshwa and he was very easily netted, thus sealing the doom of the line of the Peshwas.

It was not from any spirit of generosity but from sheer selfishness that Malcolm was prompted to grant the pension of eight lakhs to Baji Rao. This will be apparent from his letters, a few extracts from which are given below. To Sir Thomas Munro he wrote afterwards :

"I have not been so happy in this case as to anticipate the wishes of the Governor-General. He expected Baji Rao would get no such terms : that his distress would force him to submit on any conditions, and that his enormities deprived him of all right either to princely treatment or princely pension. I think the lord will, when he hears all, regret the precipitation with which he formed his judgment. In the first place, he will find that inspite of the Report made by every commanding officer who ever touched Baji Rao that he had destroyed him, that the latter was not destroyed, but had about six thousand good horses and five thousand infantry, and the gates of Asseer wide open, all his property sent in there, and half his councillors praying him to follow it, while Jeswant Rao Lar was passionatley ambitious of being a martyr in the cause of the Marhatta sovereign, add to this the impossibility of besieging Asseer till after the rains—the difficulty of even half blockading it, and the agitated state of the country—and then let the lord pronounce the article I purchased was worth the price I paid, and he will find it proved I could not get it cheaper."†

Again in a letter to Mr. Adam, dated 19th June, 1818, Malcolm declared, in the first place, that the condition of Baji Rao was not so desperate at the beginning of June with the English in the pursuit and conquest of that Brahman chieftain. The Raja of Satara being the descendant of Shivaji the Great, was the undoubted sovereign of the Marathas, the people owing allegiance to him flocked to his standard and thus they ceased espousing the cause of Baji Rao the Peshwa.

\* Kaye's *Life of Malcolm* II, 24,

† *Ibid.*, p. 257.

but that he might have protracted the war, with no hope assuredly of eventual success but with the certainty of keeping our armies for some time in the field at a ruinous expense to the State.

Baji Rao made his submission in June, 1818, and was sent to Bithoor, near Cawnpore, on the river Ganges, where he died at an advanced age in 1850. He was the last of the Peshwas and his political career terminated in 1818.

English writers have described him as addicted to all sorts of debauchery, and as a cruel, oppressive and tyrannical sovereign. The falsity of these statements will become evident when we remember the fact of the old age which he attained and the vigorous physical constitution which he always maintained—quite impossible for any man addicted to debauchery.

But even assuming that he was a debauched prince, was he worse than many of the sovereigns of that period? Why do English writers take delight in painting him in the blackest colours possible, forgetting that the members of their own royal family of that period were not immaculate saints? What about the secret history of the Georges and the mysteries of the Court of London?

If it be true that he was cruel and oppressive to his subjects, then it would have been quite impossible for his subjects to have attained that material prosperity which they undoubtedly did under his *regime*. The population of Puna at that time was much larger than it is now, and as to its prosperous condition, an Englishman has borne testimony as follows :

"On a late excursion into the Deccan I was exceedingly pleased and surprised to observe the great appearance of prosperity which the city of Poonah exhibited, and which was the more remarkable after the scenes of desolation, plunder and famine, it had been so lately subjected to ; all the principal streets and bazars were crowded with people, whose dress and general appearance displayed symptoms of comfort and happiness, of business and industry, not to be exceeded in any of our own great commercial towns. The whole, indeed, was a smiling scene of general welfare and abundance. On noticing this to the Resident, he informed me that the Peshwa, since his return, with a view of promoting the prosperity of Poonah, had exempted it and the surrounding country from every description of tax, and to prevent the possibility of exactions unknown to himself, had even abolished the office of Cutwal. This fact is at least one proof, among various others, of the practicability of introducing what are termed the European principles of economy into Indian societies, with the same happy effects as have been experienced elsewhere."\*

But it must be admitted that Baji Rao was a timid man and false to himself, for he tried to curry favour with the English. Had he not done so, he would have met with treatment far different from what he did.

He was an unlucky man and though possessing the sweetest of tempers and most fascinating manners, the times were against him and he was a victim of base intrigues and foul conspiracies on the part of the English in general and Elphinstone in particular. From the analysis of the facts which have been set forth above, it will be gathered that Elphinstone all along treated him with scant courtesy and defied his authority, and, by forcing on him the unwelcome treaty of 1817, provoked him to war, which

\* R. Richards, 23rd July, 1801. Quoted by Mr. William Digby, C.I.E., in his "*Prosperous British India—a Revelation*", page 450.

certainly was not of Baji Rao's own seeking. Then it should be remembered how Elphinstone surrounded the Peshwa with spies and paid emissaries and intriguers to calumniate him and keep himself informed of all his doings.\* An upright Resident would have certainly prevented those occurrences which brought the Peshwa to ruin and would have made the English name famous for justice and fair play. But in all the acts of Elphinstone are to be seen his meanness of spirit and selfish motives for aggrandisement at the expense of the Peshwa.†

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\* "So complete was our informaton, that one of the charges made by Baji Rao to Sir J. Malcolm at Maholy against Mr. Elphinstone, was, that he was so completely watched that the latter knew the very dishes that were served at his meals."

(Lieut.-General Briggs's memorandum, quoted by Sir T. E. Colebrooke in his *Life of Mountstuart Elphinstone*, Vol. I, p. 303.)

† It was the policy of the British Government of India of the day to bring about the ruin of the Peshwa, for he was considered to be the main link which had held together the Maratha Confederacy, and by his being struck out of the chain that confederacy was disunited for ever.

In order to effect the ruin of the Peshwa, he was ill treated and provoked to hostilities by the British authorities. Some color is lent to this view by the Parliamentary Papers relating to the Raja of Satara, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 18th August, 1843. On page 914 of these Papers it is stated :

"The dispute between the Peishwa and the English might have been adjusted after having been investigated, through Gangadhar Shastree, had the mutual agreement in question not been pledged."

What "the mutual agreement" was is described as follows in these Papers :

"In consequence of Baji Rao's conduct, the disaffection of the people, and the opposition he had caused to His Highness the Maharaja, and, in order to adjust the irregularity, His Highness the Maharaja considered that a man of great riches will of course have weight with a great one, and Baji Rao was reconciled with the English, and their business commenced forthwith.

"Chutoorsing Raja Bhoslay, who deputed Jaderow Dadrou and Bapoo Phurness to the Governor-General while he was at Delhi, requested an order to the Governor, Mr. Duncan, at Bombay, for the management of the country, who, in reply, stated that the request cannot be acceded to until any differences are brought into the treaty which has been made between the English Government and Baji Rao Peishwa, and if such should happen, His Highness should rest assured that, he being the possessor of the dominion, it shall then revert to him.

"Afterwards Mr. Elphinstone, the late Governor of Bombay, who for the purpose of obtaining information relative to the affair of Kolapoorkur, invited Balwantrow Malahar, the Chitnees Pandit Soomunt, and his father, when they both satisfied Mr. Elphinstone of the supreme power of his Highness over the chieftains, as the Peishwa pretended to be independent of His Highness. Mr. Elphinstone, on having been explained by them the fact, stated, that when any differences occur in the treaty between the English and Baji Rao, or should he anywhere levy war, then His Highness the Maharaja should be confident of my word which I have just pledged, for the restoration of his Government.



## CHAPTER LV

### APPA SAHEB, THE RAJA OF NAGPUR

The Maratha prince of the family of Bhonsle, with his capital at Nagpur, was called in Marathi chronicles the Raja of Berar. But after the Second Maratha War, Berar was taken from him and handed over to the Nizam. Hence, although he was often styled Raja of Berar, yet correctly his appellation should be the Raja of Nagpur. The name of the Raja—at the time when the Marquis of Hastings was moving troops to ostentatiously ruin the Pindaris but in reality to deprive the Maratha princes of their territories and independence—was Appa Sahib. After the Second Maratha War, the Raja of Nagpur, although often requested to enter into the Subsidiary Alliance with the East India Company, very wisely declined to do so. But hardly a dozen years had elapsed since that war, when circumstances arose which obliged the ruling prince of Nagpur to conclude a treaty with the British Government and allow their troops to take the place of those of his own dominion.

After the Second Maratha War, Elphinstone was accredited to the Court at Nagpur as representative of the British Government. He served as Resident at Nagpur for four years. The manner in which he carried on intrigues with the officers and ministers of that principality, demoralized them and paved the way to the Subsidiary Alliance, which seemed to have been the object which the then British Indian Government had in view. Elphinstone was a creature of the Duke of Wellington and had been trained in his school of diplomacy. Wellington was instrumental in getting him appointed as Envoy to the Court of Nagpur. In recommending Elphinstone to his brother, the then Governor General of India, the hero of Assaye wrote:

"Upon the occasion of mentioning Mr. Elphinstone, it is but justice to that gentleman to inform your Excellency that I have received the greatest assistance from him since he has been with me. He is well versed in the language, has experience and a knowledge of the Maratha powers and their relation with each other and with the British Government and its allies. He has been present in all the actions which have been fought in this quarter during the war, and at all the sieges. He is acquainted with every transaction that has taken place, *and with my sentiments upon all subjects.* I therefore take the liberty of recommending him to your Excellency." (Wellington Despatches, II, 595).

The words put in italics require to be specially taken note of. The Iron Duke had succeeded in making Elphinstone a past master in the craft of the Machiavellian diplomacy, and initiating him in the art of intrigue, all which had for their object the ruin of the princes to whose courts these Envoys were accredited.

At the time when Elphinstone was sent to Nagpur he was only 24 years of age and seemed not to have been well versed in the art of intrigue which passed for diplomacy. We are told by his biographer, Sir J. E. Colebrooke, that

"The hardest of his tasks remained when the letter of the treaty was fulfilled. The aim of the British Government, in insisting that a British representative should reside at the Court, was not merely to cultivate general relations of amity, but to provide against future ruptures.

Mr. Elphinstone's instructions assumed that a sovereign whose treachery was notorious, and whose sacrifices had been so great, might be induced to renew the war, in the hope of recovering part of what he had lost. The new secretary was therefore enjoined to be accurately informed of all that passed in the Durbar, particularly to watch the embassies of Sindia and Holkar, and at the same time obtain distinct information of the numbers and disposition of the Raja's troops. It will appear that this portion of Mr. Elphinstone's instructions caused him no little embarrassment. The information required could only be obtained through the ministers themselves : and *to probe such sources of intelligence involved a course of intrigue that was repugnant to his nature.*"\*

The words italicised in the above extract show that at the time he was sent to Nagpur, Elphinstone was not well versed in the art of intriguing. It seems that he turned to his patron, Sir Arthur Wellesley, to come to his rescue, and wrote to him for instructions on the subject. The reply to Elphinstone's letter was characteristic of the future conqueror of Napoleon. General Wellesley wrote :

"In answer to your letter of the 6th, I beg you will do whatever you think necessary to procure intelligence. If you think that Jye Kishen Ram will procure it for you or give it to you, promise to recommend him to the Governor-General, and write to his Excellency on the subject."†

General Wellesley's recommendation in plain language meant corruption. This is evident from another letter of his to Elphinstone in which he wrote :

"Before Ram Chunder went away he offered his services. I recommend him to you. He appears a shrewd fellow, and he has certainly been employed by the Raja in his most important negotiations. I have recommended him to the Governor-General for a pension of 6,000 rupees a year. I think he will give you useful intelligence."§

Thus Elphinstone was enjoined to raise traitors in the camp of the Raja, by holding out temptations to them. Yet Sir Arthur Wellesley is looked upon as a paragon of all Christian virtues and must have prayed every day, "Lead us not into temptations, but deliver us from all evils."

Although Elphinstone did not succeed in involving the Bhonsla Raj in ruin, or inflicting the curse of the Subsidiary Alliance on that prince, for we are told that 'the Raja appears to have acted in a straightforward way' and that he 'remained steady to his resolve to avoid a new rupture'; yet the lessons in the art of intrigue which he had learnt at Nagpur, he brought to good use when he was appointed at Puna, for there he succeeded in bringing about the downfall of the Peshwa.

But when the Marquis of Hastings went to war with the Marathas, Elphinstone was not the Resident at Nagpur, and the reigning prince was Appa Saheb. The Raja who had signed the treaty with the British was now dead, and the Nagpur state had also entered into Subsidiary Alliance with the East India Company.

Mr. Jenkins was the Resident now and he was a bosom friend of Elphinstone. The biographer of Elphinstone writes :

"Like Elphinstone, Jenkins had commenced his diplomatic career during the Mahratta war, which brought so many of our best Indian statesmen to the front. Ten years later, Jenkins, like Elphinstone, had to contend with the intrigues, and ultimately with the open hostility of a Mahratta Court, at a

\* Vol. I., p. 112.

† *Ibid.*, p. 113.

§ *Ibid.*

crisis of Indian history. To complete the parallel, these two Indian statesmen had congenial pursuits.”\*

Does it not follow, therefore, that Jenkins must have adopted the same diplomatic tactics at Nagpur, which Elphinstone did at Puna?

But it will be necessary to narrate in detail the events which preceded the hostilities between Appa Saheb and the troops of the Company. As long as Raghuji Bhonsla, the sovereign of Nagpur, who was a party to the Treaty of Deogaum, was alive, he did not, and would not, part with his independence by entering into a subsidiary alliance with the East India Company. Times without number their government had asked him through their representative at Nagpur to form such an alliance. But all their attempts failed, as they were bound to do, for Raghuji had no faith in them, as he was well acquainted with their character. But his death in April, 1816, was hailed with delight by them, for now was the opportunity for them to get the object so dear to their hearts accomplished. The long train of intrigues which had been set in motion ever since the appointment of Elphinstone as Envoy at Nagpur was now to carry them to the desired goal.

Raghuji Bhonsla had a son named Pursaji, commonly known as Bala Saheb. This prince was of weak intellect and incapable of managing his affairs. But he had a cousin, the celebrated Appa Saheb, who was a capable man and every one in Nagpur used to look upon him as the future successor of Raghuji. The English Resident also did the same and, therefore, even in the life-time of Raghuji, to win him over to the cause of the British Government, intrigued with him by showing him some undue favors. Appa Saheb had not been on good terms with his uncle, who for some causes, the nature of which it is difficult to ascertain now, desired to deprive him of a portion of his estate which he had inherited from his father. There can be no question of the legality and validity of such a step on the part of Raghuji, for he was the independent sovereign of his kingdom and exercised unlimited power over the lives and properties of his subjects. But his nephew, Appa Saheb, appealed to the Resident to intercede on his behalf and prevent the Raja from accomplishing his desire. The Resident, of course, had no power to do so. Yet, setting all articles of the treaty at naught, he interested himself in the cause of Appa Saheb. We are told that his estate

“had been preserved to him, at last, by the aid of a remonstrance of the British Resident at Nagpur, and this circumstance not only produced an irreconcilable difference between the two princes, but induced Raghuji to have recourse to a series of measures, calculated to annoy and distress his nephew in every possible way.”†

Thus was Appa Saheb won over to the side of the English and was therefore no doubt the centre of intrigues in Nagpur. However, when his uncle was on his death-bed, he was sent for and earnestly entreated, as a dying request, to look after the welfare of the principality. Raghuji placed the hand of his son within that of Appa Saheb and said that he made him the depository of the family honor.

On the death of Raghuji, owing to the incapacity of his son, a council of regency was

\* *Ibid.*, p. 151.

† *Prinsep's History of the Political and Military Transactions in India*, Vol. I., p. 345.

formed, of which Appa Saheb was the head. No sooner was the news of Raghujī's death known than the Marquess of Hastings issued instructions to Mr. Jenkins to draw, by any means within his power, Appa Saheb into the net of the Subsidiary Alliance. He looked on the death of Raghujī as the long sought for opportunity to accomplish this object. Prinsep writes:

"The intrigues and passing occurrences of that court likewise promised equally to give [the long-sought opportunity of establishing a subsidiary connection with the Nagpur State."

It is not necessary to enter into the labyrinth of these intrigues which, it is not unreasonable to suppose, was to a great extent the creation of the English to gain their end. How desirous the Governor-General was for the alliance and the advantages which he thought would be derived from it, is evident from what Prinsep has written in the work\* referred to above.

Amidst all these intrigues, Pursaji was formally installed as Raja, and Appa Saheb was solemnly declared to be vested, by the Raja himself, with the sole and entire conduct of the public affairs. Prinsep writes that

"Mr. Jenkins was the first to offer his own congratulations and those of the government he represented, upon the auspicious commencement of the new reign."†

Well might Mr. Jenkins have done so, knowing how useful a tool Appa Saheb would prove in his hands. Prinsep has shown in his work§ the nature of the intrigues that reigned in Nagpur.

It was these intrigues which, it is said, induced Appa Saheb to seek the aid of the English. Mr. Jenkins was only too glad to embrace the opportunity to place the yoke of the subsidiary alliance on the neck of the Nagpur Chief. It was necessary to mature the conspiracy at dead of night. Accordingly it was done on the night of the 24th April.\*\* How this nefarious business was transacted has been very well described by Prinsep in his *History of the Political and Military Transactions in India*, pages 358-368, Vol. I.

\* See pages 340-341 and 350 and 351 of the *History of Political and Military Transactions in India*.

† *Ibid.*, p. 356.

§ Pages 357-358 of Vol. I.

\*\* From the Private Journal of the Marquess of Hastings, pp. 254 *et seq.*, Panini Office reprint:—"June 1st [1816]. This day has brought to me the treaty of alliance by which Nagpore in fact ranges itself as a feudatory State under our protection. A singular contention of personal interests at the court of that country, resulting from the unexpected death of Raghujee Bhoosla, the late Rajah, has enabled me to effect that which has been fruitlessly labored at for the last twelve years. Though dexterity has been requisite, and money has removed obstructions, I can affirm, that the principles of my engagement are of the purest nature. Pursojee Bhoosla, only son of the late Rajah, succeeded to the musnad without opposition. He is blind, and thence used to remain unseen in the palace so that in fact he was unknown. He was generally understood to be of weak capacity, but when his elevation gave people the opportunity of examining him, he was discovered to be literally an idiot. His cousin Appa Saheb, an active sensible man about twenty years of age, is presumptive heir to the musnad, Pursojee having no children. Through his natural pretension, and with as much of assent as the Rajah could comprehend and testify, Appa Saheb was called to the guidance of affairs as

The Subsidiary Alliance which Appa Saheb contracted with the then British Government was very unpopular with the nobles and people of Nagpur. Mr. Jenkins knew as much. As long as Pursaji was alive, there was a fear lest he should some day try to revoke the alliance. On the morning of the 1st February 1817, Pursaji was found dead in his bed, which suggested that violence had been used in causing his death. Of course, at that time Appa Saheb was not in Nagpur.\*

Jenkins took no notice of all that the people were talking about it and even did not refer to it in his correspondence with the Governor-General. In his letter to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, dated 21st August, 1820, the Marquis of Hastings wrote :

"This letter stated the Resident's conviction, that the late Raja of Nagpore, Bala Sahib, had been murdered by order of Appa Sahib. The Court of Directors were referred, in the letter of the Governor-General in Council dated the 1st of October 1819, to the proofs by which this fact became satisfactorily established. I now allude to it because the circumstances which impressed Mr. Jenkins with the belief of this atrocity having been committed materially induced his resolution to arrest the Rajah. Mr. Jenkins's suspicions as to the fact had, indeed, been excited at the period of Bala Sahib's decease, but circumstances, which I need not recapitulate, having somewhat lessened them, and the difficulty of acquiring satisfactory proof being apparent, he did not deem it right to intimate, even to his own government, doubts which had been in a great degree dismissed from his own mind nearly as soon as they had been admitted."

Now, the above clearly leads to the suspicion that Jenkins was a party to the murder, (supposing the death of Bala Sahib was due to foul play), for he at that time minister. Aware that there is a strong party against him in the palace, he feared that Pursojee might be made to adopt a son, which according to Mahratta institutions would cut out Appa Saheb. The latter had to apprehend that this would be a machination of Scindiah's with the women of the palace, and those apparent dependents who really guide them; and he foresaw that in such an event Scindiah would support the adopted child with troops, in order to acquire the rule over Nagpore.

"Under these impressions, Appa Saheb was not difficult to be worked upon. He is confirmed in his legitimate power, and he is ensured against the adoption by my professing to consider Pursojee incapable of the volition necessary to the act. This is most strictly true, for the poor Rajah has no will or wish beyond eating and sleeping. The security, therefore, to Appa Saheb is only simple justice. I believe the advantage of our having thus converted Nagpore from a very doubtful neighbour into a devoted friend is universally felt here; yet the whole extent of the gain will not be thoroughly computed. The arrangement enables me to leave unguarded above three hundred miles of frontier, for which I had difficulty to allot defence, it totally oversets the plan at which Scindiah has been secretly working for inducing the Peishwa to re-establish the Mahratta confederacy; it deprives Scindiah of troops and treasure, on which he calculated in all his hostile speculations; it gives to me, by the junction of Colonel Doveton's Corps with the Nagpore forces, an efficient army on the open flank of Scindiah's country; and it renders the interception of the Pindaries, should they venture another inroad into our southern territories, almost certain. I regard this event as giving me the fairest ground of confidence that I shall be able to achieve all I wish to effect for the Company's interest without any war. This rests on our presumption of the Peishwa's fidelity. If he be treacherous (and there is no answering for a Mahratta), we might have a struggle; but the consequence of such a contest could not now be doubtful, and it would only make the ultimate arrangement more beneficial to the Company."

\* The circumstances which led to his leaving Nagpur have been narrated by Prinsep in his History, Vol. I, pages 421-426.

did nothing to investigate it, although by his own showing it was being freely whispered in Nagpur and that he failed in his duty in not reporting the matter to the Government of India; or that charging Appa Saheb with the murder was merely an after-thought made with some ulterior motives the nature of which it is not difficult to guess. As to the so-called proofs, it is notorious how easily evidence could be fabricated by a little manipulation on the part of the men in power against a fallen man. Truly did Macaulay write in his famous essay on Warren Hastings

"They considered him a fallen man, and they acted after the kind some of our readers may have seen in India, a crowd of crows pecking a sick vulture to death. No bad type of what happens in that country, as often as fortune deserts one who had been great and dreaded. In an instant, all the sycophants who had lately been ready to lie for him, to forge for him, to pander for him, to poison for him hasten to purchase the favor of his victorious enemies by accusing him. An Indian Government has only to let it be understood that it wishes a particular man to be ruined, and in twenty-four hours it will be furnished with grave charges supported by depositions so full and circumstantial, that any person unaccustomed to Asiatic mendacity, would regard them as decisive. It is well if the signature of the destined victim is not counterfeited at the foot of some illegal compact, and if some illegal paper is not slipped into a hiding place in the house."

Such being the case, the statement that Bala Saheb was murdered by his cousin Appa Saheb may be doubted. However after Bala Saheb's death, Appa Saheb returned to Nagpur, but his attitude towards his British allies was much changed. The Subsidiary Alliance proved a galling yoke to his neck and he seemed to have bitterly repented the hour when he was lured into its snare.

"The conditions of the treaty were somewhat severe, and the amount of the subsidy exceeded a due proportion of the revenues of the country. The charge of the contingent was an addition to a burthen already too weighty for the State, and the Raja had some grounds for complaining of the costliness of his new friends."\*

In a foot-note to the above passage it is added :

"The whole charge of the subsidy and contingent, amounted to between twenty and thirty lakhs a year, and was more than one-third of the whole revenue."

Thus Appa Saheb had good cause for his dissatisfaction with the greedy Company's servants. It is not unnatural, therefore, that the manner in which he was being ill-treated and bullied by his English friends made him determined to throw off their yoke.†

How the Raja was being subjected to petty annoyances may also be gathered from the following extracts from the letter of the Marquis of Hastings to the Secret Committee of the East India Company dated 21st August, 1820. He wrote :

"We had, soon after his accession, much reason to be dissatisfied with his conduct, both as to his dismissal of the ministers, Nagoo Pundit and Narayan Pundit, who had been chiefly instrumental in bringing about the alliance and as to his continued negotiations with Bajee Rao. The latter, although they might not be pronounced positive indications of a hostile spirit, considering the Maratha habits of deception, were still direct infractions of the treaty. His entire failure in the organization and maintenance of his contingent on the footing which the treaty entitled us to expect and demand, and

\* Mill and Wilson, VIII, 186.

† The treatment which he was at this time receiving at the hands of Jenkins, has been described by Prinsep in his History, Vol. I, pp. 427-430.

his evident disregard, notwithstanding his professions to the contrary, of the Resident's repeated instances directed to that object constituted an equally important ground of complaint. . . .

"Although every exertion, in the form of advice and of kind admonition, was employed by the Resident to direct the attention of the Rajah to the true character of the conduct which he was pursuing, and to its unavoidable tendency to the destruction of the alliance from which he, and the state under his rule, has already so largely benefited, no impression seemed to have been made on him until the termination of the discussions at Poona, in June 1817. That event was calculated to have a salutary influence on his future views and procedures, and might have warned him of the peril to which he would expose himself and his government, should he permit himself to be allured by the fallacious project of a general combination against our power."<sup>8</sup>

It was, of course, necessary for the British Government of those days not to take into consideration the fact that their ally was not in a position to carry out all the conditions and provisions of the Treaty into which he had been betrayed by scheming and designing men in the pay of the Company. That Appa Saheb was anxious to do everything in his power to conciliate the British Government and not to offend them is evident from the testimony of Malcolm, not an inexperienced diplomatist and certainly a better qualified man than Jenkins. In his dispatch, dated 9th October 1817, to the Governor-General, he wrote :

"Having received instructions from his Excellency Sir Thomas Hislop to proceed to Nagpore, for the purpose of obtaining information regarding the resources of the country and making such arrangements with the Resident and the local Government, as were necessary for the general objects of the public service, I left Hyderabad on the 4th of September, and reached Nagpore on the 23rd of that month : and during a stay of ten days every object that was in the contemplation of his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief has, I hope, been accomplished . . . It only remains, therefore, for me to state the general tenor of the Conference I had with the Raja, and the impression left upon my mind by his sentiments and conduct.

"The Raja came to a garden three miles from Nagpore to meet me and was very pointed in paying me every compliment that could mark the gratification he received from the visit, but as the meeting was one of ceremony, nothing particular passed. Two days after I paid my respects to him at his palace in the city, and after sitting some time in public durbar, he retired to another room, accompanied by Mr. Jenkins, Ram Chander Waugh, and myself. He, upon this occasion, entered fully into a discussion of all points connected with the full performance of his engagements, and expressed himself very solicitous to deserve your Lordship's approbation by his efforts on the present occasion which, I stated to him, in the strongest manner, presented the most favorable opportunity for proving the sincerity of his professions. . . . .

"The day after this interview I went with Mr. Jenkins to look at the contingent, of whom there were drawn up for inspection two thousand five hundred horse, and two thousand infantry. The horse were in appearance better than I had expected, several parties were very well mounted. The infantry, though an undisciplined rabble, are stout men, and may, even in their present state (if they are regularly paid), be found serviceable in the defence of posts and the guarding of passes over rivers and mountains.

"I paid my visit of leave on the 4th instant, the day I left Nagpore, and though the Raja was in considerable distress on account of the dangerous illness of his favourite wife, he did not decline entering upon business. The minister being absent, he retired, unattended by anyone but Mr. Jenkins and myself, to a private room, where he took the opportunity of entering very fully into his condition, and that of his country. He had, he observed, deliberately and advisedly abandoned all other connexions for that of the British Government. He knew, he said, his own stability and the

prosperity of his subjects depended upon his adherence to this policy, which nothing could ever make him change. He earnestly solicited me to impress this upon your Lordship's mind, . . .

"I believe the Raja to be sincere in the professions he made to me at these conferences, but though satisfied that he at present harbours no unfriendly feelings to the alliance, and that any desire which the artifice of others might lead him to form for disobeying it, would be checked by his apprehensions of our power. I fear his inexperience, the intrigues of a divided court, and the actual condition of the state he rules, will prevent our receiving for some period that efficient aid from the resources of his country, which might, under a general view, be anticipated. The recent changes that have taken place in his ministers must have increased the violence of the different parties, combinations will continue to be formed against the favorite of the day, and his disgrace will be sought through the usual means of misrepresenting and counteracting his measures. The Raja, though convinced of the necessity of an alliance with the British Government, has a natural jealousy of the progress of that to encroach upon his independence. This is the ground, therefore, which is taken by men who, covering their private feelings under the garb of patriotic spirit, desire to impress his mind with a belief that his minister is in reality our agent: and the caution this imposes upon the latter must create delays and obstructions to the public service that will often wear the appearance of indifference, if not of hostility. . . .

"Besides all these causes, a degree of inertness appears to pervade every department of this government, which requires to be seen before it can be believed. We should not perhaps quarrel with a failing to which we, in a considerable degree, owe the incalculable advantages we have already derived from the connection, and the inconveniences we now experience from this cause will, I am assured, be corrected, as far as it is possible they can be, by the unremitting efforts of the Resident, to whose knowledge and energy I look, with a hope that nothing else could inspire, for the gradual fulfilment of every object that your Lordship's foresight contemplated in the formation of this important alliance."

Malcolm's usual quickness of perception grasped the situation at once; and had he, or a man of his type, been the political resident at Nagpur, matters would not have come to that pass which they did under the blundering policy of Jenkins, who as said before, resembled Elphinstone in almost every respect. Although the Raja always called him his brother, that resident never did any brotherly act to that unfortunate prince. Indeed, as the subsequent events show, he was bent upon his ruin.

The Peshwa Baji Rao, at this time, sent a *Khillut*, with the knowledge and approval of Elphinstone, to the Nagpur Raja. This *Khillut* arrived at Nagpur towards the middle of November, 1817. The Raja invited Jenkins to the ceremonial *darbar* that was to be held to invest him with the *Khillut*. But this he declined to do. He explained his conduct in a letter which he wrote to General Sir Thomas Hislop, dated the 24th November 1817<sup>1</sup> He wrote:

"Last night I received a note from Ramchunder Waugh, stating that a *Khillut* had arrived from the Peishwa for the Raja. This *Khillut*, he said, had been brought by Kundoo Pundit, the Raja's *Vakeel* lately dismissed by the Peishwa, under the treaty of Poona, and that Mr. Elphinstone had been the means of procuring for the Raja this mark of distinction, that to-morrow as a lucky day was fixed for receiving it with due ceremonies, which consisted in the Raja going out in state to his camp with his *Zurputka*, firing salutes, and remaining three days at the head of his troops. The Raja requested that either I would attend myself, or send some one on my part to be present at the ceremony and that I would also order a salute to be fired on the occasion: to this communication I replied, that when the *Khillut* in question left Poona, the Peishwa was still



on terms of amity with the British Government and His Highness, that what had since happened, which His Highness well knew, placed the Peishwa in the light of an enemy to both states, that under such circumstances the accepting of a *Khillut* from the Peishwa, in such a public manner, would have a very bad appearance, that I was convinced that the Governor-General would not receive a *Khillut* from the Peishwa under such circumstances, and certainly would not expect His Highness to do any such things, and having said this, I left the matter to his prudence, and a due sense of what might be the consequence. Notwithstanding this remonstrance, I received this morning a note from Ramchunder Waugh saying that the Raja intended to receive the *Khillut* in the manner before-mentioned, but that it ought not to raise any unpleasant feelings in my mind, as it had been sent through our channel, and could excite no enmity between the two states, as they are one.

"The Raja accordingly, having first received the *Khillut* in public durbar, and the nuzurs of all his chiefs and ministers, proceeded to his principal camp on the west side of the town, where he was received with uncommon demonstrations of pomp and show, and with every ceremony indicative of his having received the dignity of Senapati, or general-in-chief of the armies of the Mahratta Empire. On this I have only to remark, that it is generally considered as a demonstration of the Raja's alliance with the Peishwa and his determination to follow the path already entered upon by Bajee Row."

It is not necessary to make lengthy comments on the above. Jenkins should not have tried to obstruct—nay, positively prohibit—a ceremonial occasion as the one which the Raja was going to celebrate. If he could not have joined in the ceremony, he should have kept quiet, instead of from that moment looking upon the Raja as his enemy. How devoted the Raja was to the British is evident from the letter from which extracts have been made above. Jenkins in continuation of his above-mentioned letter wrote :

"With regard to the project of attacking the British troops at this place, I have received continual communications since my Despatches of the 14th instant, to your Excellency and Sir J. Malcolm, describing the arguments which have been used to excite the Rajah to such a step, and the hitherto successful opposition of his more prudent advisers, but not a word indicative of any complaint against us, or any intention on the part of the Raja to break with us has appeared from any of his public communications : On the contrary, His Highness being alarmed a few nights ago by a false report, 'doubtless fabricated by the warlike faction, that the British troops were moving out to attack him, sent for my Mahratta moonshee, and talked for an hour against the treachery of the Peishwa, and the impossibility of his following his example, whether his means were considered, his actual situation, living as he was with his family in an open town and without any fort of consequence, except Chanda, to place them in security, and above all, his gratitude towards the British Government, to whose favour and protection he owed everything, and should always desire to owe everything to it, and it alone."

But all these sincere professions and protestations of good will and friendship on the part of Appa Saheb, towards the British Government, had no effect on the Resident. Appa Saheb, if anything, was a fool and a timid man, and to consider him as capable of harbouring an scheme of war against the English is simply preposterous. However, it suited the interests of the Government of India at that time to treat him as an enemy.

H. H. Wilson's opinion that the alliance was not of much profit to Appa Saheb has already been quoted before. The Raja therefore naturally wanted that some

modifications should be made in the terms of the alliance which were pressing very heavily on him. The points which the Raja wanted to be adjusted were as follows :

"1st, Goojubbhur be sent back to Nagpore ; 2ndly, the contingent be not too nicely inspected ; 3rdly, some arrangement be made to prevent the Raja's revenue suffering so much as it did by the remission of duties on grain, &c., for the use of our large armies 4thly, our troops in the Raja's territory be reduced to the number fixed by treaty ; 5thly, some consideration is shewn to the Raja's pecuniary necessities, which, from our demands and those of his own troops, almost reduced him to despair."

It cannot be said that these points did not require immediate adjustment. But Jenkins was of a different opinion. Although he had heard of these grievances before, yet he took no steps to redress them and he looked upon this public mention of them as 'a full admission of an hostile purpose.' For in his dispatch to the Governor-General dated the 26th November, 1817, he wrote :

"I had before received private overtures from Nagoo Pundit mentioning these as the Raja's grievances, and offering his services to accommodate everything, but this is the first public mention of these grievances, and is a full admission of an hostile purpose."\*

At the same time Jenkins ordered the marching in of British troops to Nagpur. In concluding the above-mentioned dispatch, Jenkins wrote to the Governor-General :

"The detachment under Colonel Gahan has been ordered to march in, leaving its baggage : and it ought to arrive to-morrow night. Nothing but the Raja's entire submission and full security for the future, which can be a work I conceive neither of time nor of difficulty, ought now to cause any relaxation in the most active means to reduce him, and I hope that either his Excellency Sir Thomas Hislop or Brigadier-General Doveton will be shortly on their march."

The words of the above passage are specially commended to the notice of those who think that Appa Saheb forced the British to go to war with him. If anything, it was Jenkins who provoked the Nagpur chief to hostilities. It is not human nature to sit idle while one's enemies are busily engaged in making warlike preparations.

On the evening of the 26th November, 1817, the Raja's troops fired on the Residency but were repulsed. The news of the marching in of the British troops and the habitual contempt with which the Raja and his advisers and followers were treated by the Resident must have undoubtedly influenced the Raja's troops to commence hostilities. That the Raja himself did not instigate these hostilities is perfectly certain from his subsequent conduct.† His troops must have got out of hand and been incited

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\* Papers relating to the War in India, presented to both House of Parliament, by command of the Prince Regent, Feb. 1819, page 70.

† Prinsep, in his 'History of the Political and Military Transactions in India' during the administration of the Marquess of Hastings, Vol. II, pp. 102-104, refers to his "decided pusillanimity," "extreme weakness and irresolution."

Is it not clear from the above, that Appa Saheb did not meditate any attack on the Residency or seriously think of going to war with the British? It is sheer nonsense to say that he betrayed 'extreme weakness and irresolution.' He knew the consequences that would result from attacking the Residency. Had he ordered the attack, it is not probable that he would have shown such want of common sense as not to have persisted in it and tried to cut off the advancing troops that were marching on Nagpur.

to this rash act by the Raja's enemies. We should not forget what Malcolm wrote to the Governor-General in his letter dated the 9th October, 1817, from which extracts have already been given before. He wrote:

"The recent changes that have taken place in his ministers must have increased the violence of the different parties, combinations will continue to be formed against the favorite of the day, and his disgrace will be sought through the usual means of misrepresenting and counteracting his measures."

When we take all these circumstances into consideration, it is highly probable that the Raja did not instigate the attack on the Residency. Even if he did, he should be exonerated from all blame, because he had been provoked by the warlike preparations of the Resident himself. The Marquess of Hastings, in the 43rd paragraph of his letter to the Secret Committee of the East India Company, wrote:

"His (Mr. Jenkins's) first step was to secure the Residency from surprise, and to enable him to hold it and the adjacent hill until he could be joined by the troops from the the cantonment, a measure, the adoption of which, in the event of necessity, he had concerted with Lieutenant-Colonel Scott, the commanding officer."

Of course, it was the policy of the Resident to represent these as defensive measures. But these preparations combined with the news of the marching in of British troops wore quite a different complexion before the eyes of the people of Nagpur. No wonder if under provocation, they struck the first blow, thinking that under these circumstances, the party which is first in the field has generally the better chance of success.

But their attack failed. This circumstance alone is sufficient to demonstrate the fact of the thorough preparation which Jenkins had made to receive the blow, or even to offer it, if necessary. H. H. Wilson may again be quoted to show the nature and extent of the Resident's preparation. He writes:

"The greater part of the Berar subsidiary force had already taken the field, and there remained within reach a detachment which had been posted at Ramket, about three miles distant, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Scott, consisting of two battalions of Madras Sipahies, the first of the 20th and first of the 24th regiments of Native infantry: a detachment of European foot and of Native horse artillery, and three troops of the 6th Bengal Cavalry. These, upon the Resident's requisition, marched on the 25th, to the Residency grounds and were there joined by the escort, consisting of about four hundred men, with two guns, two companies of the Bengal infantry, and a few troopers of the Madras horse. On the morning of the 26th, they were placed in position on the Sitabaldi hills."\*

Of course, the situation occupied by the Resident and his men was so strong and he had made preparations so very carefully that it was not possible for the Nagpur prince's troops to successfully take it by assault. The nature of the Resident's threatening position must have alarmed them and they, without carefully making the necessary

It is said that when he was made a prisoner, he confessed to having ordered the attack on the Residency. The alleged confession of Appa Saheb rests on the testimony of Jenkins himself and as such it is hardly worth much credit. Even assuming he confessed, does it not stand to reason, that this confession was extorted from him under threats and promises the nature of which need not be dilated upon here. Every 'schoolboy' in India knows how confessions are extorted by the police.

\* *Loc. Cit.*, p. 188.

preparations on the evening of the 26th instant, opened fire on the Resident, with disastrous consequences to themselves.

As said before, the subsequent conduct of Appa Saheb showed that he had no intention of bringing about hostilities with the English. He sent a messenger to the Resident expressing his regret at what had happened, declaring that his troops had acted without his orders and that he was ready to abide by such terms as Jenkins proposed. Of course, the British troops were on their march to Nagpur, and this enabled the Resident to dictate very harsh and severe terms to his "brother" Appa Saheb. What these were may be better described in the words of the Marquess of Hastings :

"Immediately after the termination of the contest at Seetabuldee, the Raja sent a message to Mr. Jenkins, expressive of his concern for what had happened and his earnest desire to revert to his former relations of friendship with the British Government. Mr. Jenkins very properly replied to this overture, that the Raja's own proceedings had already placed the whole question beyond his discretion : that the future measures of the British Government would now be devised by higher authority than his, and that pending the receipt of my instructions as to what was to follow, all that he could do after having strenuously exerted himself to avoid the occurrence of hostilities was to maintain the advantages already gained by our troops, until the reinforcements which he had called for should come in, and enable him to execute the commands of his Government. At the same time, he declined all further negotiations with the Raja, unless his troops were withdrawn from the positions which they then held to those which they had formerly occupied. This demand was complied with, and the Raja's forces were all withdrawn during the evening and night of the 27th of November."

The Raja's complying with the demand of the Resident immediately shows how desirous he was to try to bring about amicable relations with the British. But if treachery and perfidy are to be attributed to anybody, it is to the Resident. It was convenient and necessary for him to suspend hostilities and to gain time and not to have any regard for the Raja's feelings and meet his wishes. The Governor-General continues his letter as follows :

"Mr. Jenkins, in acceding to a cessation of hostilities, was chiefly influenced by the opinion of the commanding officer relative to the harassed condition of the troops after memorable exertions on the preceding days, and by the consideration of the near approach of the expected reinforcements, as well as of the additional reputation gained by granting it on the request of an enemy beaten by an inferior force : a circumstance calculated to inspire fresh confidence in our troops and the reverse in those of the Raja."

The poor Raja, in the simplicity of his heart, placed implicit confidence in the words of the Resident and acted as that officer asked him to do. To quote again from the Marquess of Hastings' letter :

"In answer to the Raja's reiterated professions of concern and desire of renewed friendship, Mr. Jenkins continued to plead his want of authority to decide as to future measures, and took occasion to intimate, that if the Raja left Nagpore, or if a single shot was fired, his throne was irretrievably lost, his only chance of preservation from ruin being unqualified submission.

"Early on the morning of the 29th a regiment of Native Cavalry with its Gallopers arrived, and on the same evening, a message and a note were sent to Mr. Jenkins by the Raja, in which after repeating his usual expressions of contrition and reliance on our indulgence, he signified his intention of disbanding the greater part of his troops, in the hope that the treaty would be allowed to remain in force, and his former requests, noticed in a preceding paragraph, be satisfactorily adjusted.

To this communication was added a solicitation, that our troops marching upon Nagpore might be ordered to halt. Mr. Jenkins was again compelled to go over the the same ground of reply which he had already taken and to point out how little dependence could be placed on the Raja's assurances, consequently how essentially vital it was to the British interests, not to neglect every practicable means of security, and also to repeat, that the Rajas's own acts had already placed all future procedures with regard to him beyond the reach of his (Mr Jenkin's) authority . . . ."

The Raja was in the habit of hearing the Europeans boasting of their religion being one of peace, meekness and forgiveness and of their Divine Founder enjoining His followers to turn the left cheek to those who smote on the right. Acting on that belief he implored the Resident for mercy, but that officer knew not what mercy meant, he showed marked rudeness towards that prince. The Marquess of Hastings wrote :

"From this time up to the 2nd of December' on the evening of which the Rajah returned to his palace, messages of the same character were repeatedly brought, . . .

"On the 5th of December our troops at Nagpore were reinforced by a detachment of the Nizam's Regular Infantry and Reformed Horse under Major Pitman, and on the 12th, Brigadier-General Doveton arrived with his cavalry and light troops : the remainder of his division marched in on the following day.

".....Mr. Jenkins and Brigadier-General Doveton, in the absence of my instructions, which had not yet reached Nagpore, and the uncertainty of the period which might elapse before their arrival, resolved to bring matters to a termination. On the 14th, terms were offered to the Raja for his acceptance, on his refusal to comply with which, before daybreak on the 16th, it was determined immediately to follow up by a general attack on the positions of his troops.

"The terms offered were, in substance, the following: That the Raja should acknowledge that his recent attack on our troops had placed his whole state at our mercy, and that his only hope was in our forbearance and moderation; that his whole ordnance and warlike stores should be delivered up to us, a portion of them eventually to be restored on fixing the military establishments of the state; that he should disband, in concert with the Resident, his Arabs and other troops, as soon as practicable; that his army should immediately move to a position to be assigned for it; that the city of Nagpore should be evacuated and occupied by our troops, public and private property being protected, the Raja's civil authorities remaining in the exercise of their functions on his behalf and the city being restored on the conclusion of a treaty; that the Raja should repair to the British Residency or camp, and reside there until everything should be settled: that the terms granted should not go to deprive him of any considerable portion of territory, beyond what might be necessary for the payment of the subsidy and the efficient maintenance of the contingent as fixed by the former treaty,..... and that if the terms should be complied with by four o'clock on the morning of the 16th, the latest period allowed for an answer, the Raja's army should be withdrawn from their positions in and about the city, and the city occupied by British troops at seven o'clock on the same morning, the Raja himself being at liberty to come in, either before the execution of the terms or afterwards in the course of the day, as might be most agreeable."

The terms were no doubt most humiliating to the Raja. But that prince was a timid man and a great fool besides, for he reposed confidence in the so-called good intentions of his allies. It is therefore to be surmised, that he accepted all the terms which were dictated to him. But his troops were not composed of men who like him were cowards. Moreover, they would not knowingly agree to their extinction. They resolved to make a stand and tried to prevent the Raja from going over to the British. To quote again from the Marquess of Hastings' dispatch :

The next morning, at six o'clock, a message was received at the Residency, that the Arabs

would not allow the Raja to come in, and that it would take some time to give up the guns, but that all would be settled in two or three days. On this Mr. Jenkins, in communication with Brigadier-General Doveton, the troops in the meanwhile being drawn out in battle order, gave the Raja time until nine o'clock to come in, intimating that if he did so, more time might be allowed for executing the other conditions, but that if he demurred, the troops would immediately move on to the attack. A little before nine the Raja accordingly arrived at the Residency,....."

But his troops were not to be so easily coerced by the harsh terms of the Resident and they defied the orders of the Nagpur Raja to encompass their own ruin. That the Raja could not be charged with the faults of his troops every sensible man would admit. Even H. H. Wilson, who, as a thoroughbred Anglo-Indian, had very little sympathy with the Indian princes, writes :

"The disregard apparently shown to the orders of the Raja might have been preconcerted, but it not improbably arose from the headstrong wilfulness of individual leaders, and was characteristic of the relaxation of authority which prevailed generally in the Maratha armies."\*

Now ensued another battle, the main object of which was to crush the Raja's troops. To quote again from the Marquess of Hastings' dispatch :

"The next delay took place in the surrender of the guns, and the removal of the Raja's troops to the positions fixed for them. For these purposes the period allowed was extended until twelve o'clock, but on our troops proceeding at that hour to take charge of the guns, the heads of the columns were fired on by troops posted in an enclosed garden, and subsequently from several batteries in the front of Brigadier-General Doveton's lines. Our troops were immediately disposed for the attack, and the action commenced,....."

Of course, the Raja's troops without proper leaders and equipment were merely a rabble, and therefore it was no difficult task to defeat them. Although worsted, they yet did not leave Nagpur. The Marquess of Hastings writes :

"The 17th and 18th of December, the days following the action, were given to the Raja to prevail on the Arabs to evacuate the city, but although their arrears had been paid by the Raja, and every security offered on the part of the British Government for their march out of the territories of Nagpur, the evacuation was not effected. It thence became necessary for Brigadier-General Doveton to commence military operations against that part of the city where they were posted, and in order to increase his means, the place being strong, instructions were immediately issued for the march of his battering train from Akolah. Mun Bhuh, one of the principal leaders of the War-party, with the other chiefs whom Brigadier-General Doveton had just defeated, were said to be with them and to be urgent in encouraging them to resist. The Raja's horse remained scattered in every direction with the exception of a considerable body collected at Ramteg, but although they had plundered some of our cattle bringing in grain, they had not ventured to interfere with our operations."

Of course, these gallant Arabs, although defeated, with bulldog-like pertinacity stuck to their posts, and were not to be so easily persuaded to give up resisting the British troops, on whom they once at least succeeded in inflicting heavy losses. The Marquess of Hastings continues in his dispatch :

"The efforts of the troops under Brigadier-General Doveton were still directed to the dislodgement of the Arabs from the palace, on the gates of which an unsuccessful assault was made on the 24th of December, in which our troops suffered considerable loss, although the gallantry

\* *Loc. Cit.*, p. 197.

and steadiness of both officers and men were on that occasion eminently conspicuous..... Notwithstanding the failure in the immediate object of the attack, such an impression was created by it that the Arabs soon signified their willingness to evacuate on conditions and on Brigadier-General Doveton's agreeing to the proposed terms, they marched out of the city on the morning of the 30th. It was occupied by the British troops on the noon of the same day. No formal articles of capitulation were executed, the Arabs only asking for their personal safety, and a British officer with a small escort, to give them and their families a safe conduct to Mulcapore. It being anxiously desired that the city should be secured against hazard of destruction, and it being considered of importance to obtain possession of it as soon as possible, their request was granted.....

"On the occupation of Nagpore by the British troops, many of the principal people came in to the Residency, and proclamations, in the name of the Raja and the Resident, were issued throughout the country in order to promote tranquillity."

Jenkins now gained all his desired objects and it was expected that he would fulfil the promises he had held out to the Raja when he asked him to come over to the Residency and become a prisoner of the British. As said before, the Raja was given to understand

"that the terms granted should not go to deprive him of any considerable portion of territory, beyond what might be necessary for the payment of the subsidy, and the efficient maintenance of the contingent, as fixed by the former treaty, all other changes being directed solely to the preservation of tranquillity, with a due regard to the respectability of the Raja's government."

When the Raja entered into subsidiary alliance with the British Government, he was required to pay the subsidy in money and not in the cession of any territory, and it has been also pointed out before that the payment of the subsidy cost him about one-third of the gross revenue of his principality. It was on these grounds, he had asked the British Government to make some modifications in the original terms of the treaty of the subsidiary alliance. But then broke out the hostilities, and when the Raja was prevailed upon to go to the British Camp as a prisoner, he understood, as it was quite natural for a man in his situation to do, that his allies would be convinced of his innocence and would treat him with that generosity which he deserved. It was therefore that he readily accepted the terms proffered by Jenkins.

In his letter to the Marquess of Hastings dated the 9th October 1817, from which extracts have already been given before, Malcolm wrote that the Raja "always called" Jenkins "his brother", and that his "Lordship stood in the relation of a father." But neither "his brother" nor "a father" was going to behave towards him as such.

The Marquess of Hastings wanted the deposition of the Raja, and the Resident knowing the mind of his chief, was, to use a mild expression, guilty of a flagrant breach of faith: for the terms which he now offered to the Raja to conclude the treaty with the British were not the same on the distinct understanding of which the Raja had come over as a prisoner to the Residency. To quote the words of the Marquess of Hastings:

"Immediately after the quiet occupation of the city of Nagpore by the British troops, Mr. Jenkins contemplated the return of Appa Sahib to his palace, and had prepared the draft of a definitive treaty to be signed previously to the Raja's quitting the Residency.....But in the mean time, my original instructions, framed on my being informed of the attack on the Residency,

reached him, and he thus, for the first time, became apprized of my decided reluctance to the restoration of Appa Sahib to power on any conditions. He accordingly desisted from proceeding to the signature of the treaty, but as the return of Appa Sahib to the palace, and his eventual restoration to the throne, had been virtually promised, he judged himself bound to carry that measure into effect, subject to confirmation or annulment from me, and substituted for the treaty a provisional engagement, according to which the Raja was, until my further orders could be known, to retain the throne on the following conditions : That he should cede all his territories to the northward of the Nerbudda, as well as certain possessions on the southern bank, and all his rights in Berar, Gawilgurh, Sirgoolah and Jushpore in lieu of the former subsidy and contingent, that the civil and military affairs of the government should be settled and conducted by ministers in the confidence of the British government, according to the advice of the resident, that the Raja, with his family, should reside in the palace at Nagpore, under the protection of British troops, that the arrears of the subsidy should be paid up and the subsidy itself should continue to be paid, until the final transfer of the above-mentioned territories had taken place, that any forts in his territory which we might wish to occupy should immediately be given up, that the persons whom he described as principally concerned in resisting his orders should receive no favour, but be declaredly cast off by him, and if possible, be seized and delivered to the officers of the British Government, and that the two hills of Seetapuldee with the bazars, and an adequate portion of land adjoining should be ceded to the British Government, which should be at liberty to erect on them such military works as might be deemed necessary."

There was no other alternative for the Raja than to put up with these disgraceful terms as best as he could. The Governor-General writes :

"These conditions having been accepted by the Raja, he returned to his palace on the 9th of January, both that and the city being still garrisoned by our troops."

Henceforth the Raja had no shadow or semblance of independence. His lot was a very pitiable one and it was abuse of authority and language to charge him with treasonable designs or perfidious conduct. He had not the power to be guilty of these things, for not only were his resources crippled, but he was virtually a prisoner in the hands of the British in his own capital. But since the Governor-General wanted to depose him, there was no difficulty in trumping up false charges against him. "Let us again quote the words of the Governor-General whom Appa Saheb had looked upon "in the relation of a father to him." The Marquess of Hastings wrote :

"My determination to remove him from power was founded alike on the horror and disgust excited by his atrocious perfidy, on the conviction of its being impossible ever to repose confidence on one so destitute of principle and on my conception of the importance of holding up to India, as an example, the signal chastisement of so remarkable an instance of political depravity."

Such were the sentiments of the Governor-General towards Appa Saheb. Although he acquiesced in the arrangement which Jenkins had provisionally entered into with Appa Saheb, yet from the tenor of his dispatches from the passages which have been already quoted above, it is evident that he would have been extremely glad at the deposition of Appa Saheb. Jenkins seeing which side the wind was blowing, did everything in his power to please his chief. He accused the Raja of several charges the nature of which will be presently mentioned.

The new terms which were imposed on the Raja, were very galling and humiliating and the slender resources left to him were such as he could hardly maintain his dignity



with as a reigning prince, so that he was obliged to propose to the Resident the cession of his principality in lieu of a pension. The Governor-General writes:

"It is proper to notice in this place a proposal made by Appa Sahib to Mr. Jenkins, for transferring to the British Government, on certain conditions, the whole of the possessions of the State of Nagpore, himself retaining the name and form of sovereignty alone, and receiving a stipulated share of the revenues. This project he wished to substitute, instead of completing the arrangements detailed in the draft of the proposed definitive treaty which would have left in the hands of the Rajah, under prescribed limitations, the administration of the territories to the State of Nagpore."

But this arrangement did not suit the Government of India; because they knew that the revenues of the Nagpur State would not be sufficient to meet the charges which they had imposed on that prince in the shape of the subsidiary alliance and civil and military administration and then to pay the Raja a pension which would enable him to maintain his dignity and respectability. Accordingly, the Raja's proposal was declined. The Governor-General wrote to the Secret Committee of the East India Company:

"After my giving most deliberate attention to the plan suggested by the Rajah, it seemed to me that your financial interests would be better consulted by adhering to the arrangement originally contemplated. Excluding from the calculation, on both sides of the question, that portion of our military expenditure which, under any plan, would be incurred for the defence of the country and the support of the new order of things, I was of opinion that it would be more beneficial to us to obtain possession of a territory yielding a revenue of twenty lacs of rupees annually, unburthened by any other charge than that of the requisite civil establishments, than to undertake the management of a country producing annually sixty lacs of rupees, encumbered with provisions for the Rajah, his family, and the principal officers of his Government, as well as with the debts of the Rajah. The large establishments, moreover, which it would be necessary for us to maintain, from the nature of a considerable portion of the territory, and its distance from the seat of our Government, might be found much out of proportion to the pecuniary value of the possession."

It cannot be denied that the Raja consulted the interests of his subjects when he proposed to the British Government to take his territory and give him a pension. But it would not have paid the British Government to have done so. The Governor-General's own words, quoted above, conclusively prove that the Raja was called upon to make such payments to the British Government as his exchequer did not and could not allow him to do. But the demands of the Government were to be met by the Raja anyhow. Had his proposal been acceded to, then the door of the future aggrandisement on his territory by the Government would have been closed. His very inability to pay their exorbitant demands was serving as a pretext to the British Government to hold him up as their faithless ally and to practise all sorts of refined brutality on him at their sweet will and convenience and to deprive him of his rights and privileges to suit their own interests.

The Raja's proposal then was not given that careful consideration which its importance demanded. It was dismissed altogether by the Governor-General. The promised treaty with the Raja was not concluded. Jenkins said that he had discovered treasonable designs on the part of the Raja, who was therefore to be punished with

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deposition and imprisonment. To quote again from the Marquess of Hastings' despatch:

"Before, as I have already stated, the despatch which was to make known to Mr. Jenkins my sentiments and instructions could be prepared, a second revolution at Nagpore was on the eve of its accomplishment. To avert the danger which it menaced to our interests, it became indispensable that Mr. Jenkins should abandon the course then contemplated, and should, without reference to my authority, resort to measures of vigour and severity, which the unanticipated crisis rendered imperative.

"Mr. Jenkins's suspicions of the renewed machinations of Appa Sahib against the British Government were first most strongly excited by the resistance of the Killadars of Chouragurh and Mundela, notwithstanding public orders which they had received for the delivery of those fortresses to the officers of our government and by Major Roushedge's reports of unfriendly conduct manifested by the Rajah's subedar of Ruttonpore...; but here it is only necessary to observe, that it seemed improbable the garrisons of either of the former places would have held out against the offer which had been made of paying their arrears, unless their resistance had been dictated by superior authority. In fact, the Killadar of Chouragurh himself declared, that he had secret orders contravening his public instructions and the truth of the assertion was supported by information derived by Mr. Jenkins from other quarters. With regard to Mundela, Mr. Jenkins's suspicions of the same process of intrigue being in existence were confirmed by his intercepting a letter from the Killadar's agent to his master, in which allusion was made to his secret orders.

"In addition to these circumstances, Mr. Jenkins received frequent reports of an intercourse by letters being kept up with Bajee Rao and Gunput Rao, and of secret conferences of the Rajah with Nagoo Pundit and Ram Chunder Waugh, the mischievous purposes of which were to be inferred from the exclusion of Narayan Pundit, against whom the Rajah showed much discontent. He complained of that minister's having persuaded him to come into the Residency and it was evident he thought that had he held out he could at least have secured better terms. The rumours of his meditating an escape were very general and it was perfectly understood that one of the disaffected chiefs had received a sum of money for the levy of troops.....On the whole, Mr. Jenkins looked on the combination of circumstances as affording little short of positive proof of the guilt of Appa Saheb and his associates, and his only hesitation in removing the Rajah from the throne arose from a just conception that such a measure must be irrevocable if once undertaken. He consequently hastened to apprise me of the state of affairs, requesting my early instructions. Mr. Jenkins, however, at the same time very properly determined to secure the Rajah's person, if before receiving my instructions he should judge the probability of Appa Saheb's escaping to require such a step.

"The restoration of Appa Saheb to the throne seemed to me to render his subsequent removal a measure of considerable awkwardness; and I feel it to be indispensable, that its adoption should be supported, not merely by evidence sufficient for my own moral conviction of his renewed intrigues and designs against us, but such as should satisfy the superior authorities in England, as well as the public mind, that there was an absolute necessity for displacing him. In the event of such evidence being obtained, or of Appa Sahib's attempting to escape from Nagpore, which might be looked on as a distinct proof of treacherous intention, I could have no hesitation in sanctioning his arrest and conveyance to the nearest place of strength within your provinces, but the circumstances detailed by Mr. Jenkins.....did not, in my judgment, amount to such proof as would justify so decisive a course of proceeding. It was, however, sufficiently strong against Nagoo Pundit and Ram Chunder Waugh, to warrant and require their removal from the territory of Nagpore, a step which I accordingly authorized. In ordering instructions to this effect to be conveyed to Mr. Jenkins, I also directed every precaution to be taken to prevent the Rajah's escape, without giving him alarm for his personal freedom, and to secure the tranquil and peaceable administration of the country. Within a few days after those instructions had been despatched, a further letter was received by

Mr. Adam from Mr. Jenkins, which apprized me of the actual seizure of the Rajah and his confidential minister in consequence of the additional and incontestable proofs of their treachery which had come to Mr. Jenkins' knowledge. This letter stated the Resident's conviction that the Rajah of Nagpore, Bala Sahib, had been murdered by order of Appa Sahib.....The circumstances which impressed Mr. Jenkins with the belief of this atrocity having been committed, materially induced his resolution to arrest the Rajah...Two cases consequently required his deliberate consideration. It seemed doubtful in the event of Appa Sahib's being condemned on what Mr. Jenkins had already brought forward to prove his unworthiness, whether it would be proper to try him for the murder of his kinsman and sovereign, though that prince had been under our special protection: and it was still more so whether, supposing the previous circumstances to be deemed inconclusive, the other enquiry should be prosecuted. In the first case there was less difficulty, as Appa Sahib would then cease, even nominally, to be a sovereign. It appeared, however, that for our reputation, we could not go on stronger grounds in deposing him than those of such a murder. The proofs for conviction were easily producible, should the case be tried, but considerable difficulty presented itself with regard to the situation of the Rajah pending the enquiry. It was to be feared, that were he at liberty he would endeavour to escape, whether guilty or not. If innocent, he would be disposed to think that the British Government had resolved to degrade, if not to depose him, and he would hardly expect a fair trial; if guilty, there could be no doubt of his flying. At any rate, therefore, it appeared to Mr. Jenkins necessary to secure his person before his trial, should such an investigation be deemed expedient. The trial of the Rajah's instruments would have imposed the same necessity.

"Under all circumstances, and particularly with advertence to his apprehension, of escape, grounded on the knowledge of the Rajah and his advisers having become greatly alarmed at the enquiries already set on foot regarding his intrigues, which it was impossible altogether to keep secret, Mr. Jenkins determined to take the decisive step of removing him from the place and bringing him to the Residency, where he was merely, to be told that he was suspected of treachery, and that his fate would depend on the orders which further discoveries on the point might produce from me. Every suitable precaution was taken by Mr. Jenkins to prevent commotion, and on the 15th of March Appa Sahib was conveyed to the Residency. Nagoo Pundit and Ram Chunder were at the same time arrested."

The extract given above from the Governor-General's despatch is a long one, but it was necessary to do so, to show the charges against the Raja and the nature of the evidence by which those charges were to be substantiated. That the so-called intrigues of the Raja against the British Government did not deserve much credit is evident even from the Governor-General's own showing. He wrote:

"But the circumstances detailed by Mr. Jenkins . . . . . did not, in my judgment, amount to such proof as would justify so decisive a course of proceeding."

It is only necessary, therefore, to say that those charges could not be proved against the Raja.

Jenkins knew as much and therefore he brought a fresh charge against that unfortunate sovereign. He charged him with having murdered his cousin. A good deal has been said above to show the worthlessness of this charge. It was an after-thought on the part of Jenkins to accuse the Raja of such a heinous crime in order to get the object so dear to his heart accomplished. Even assuming, for the sake of argument, that the Raja committed the murder, the Resident or for the matter of that the British Government had no authority to try or punish him, for that crime. At the time of the committal of that crime, the Nagpur

State was in alliance with, and not dependent upon, the British Government. And as such the Resident had no jurisdiction to try the Raja.

It should also be remembered that the Raja was never given an opportunity to know the nature of the charges, and the evidence by which those could be substantiated. He was made a prisoner and was going to be condemned unheard. Even the farce of a trial was denied to the Bhonsla Raja, whom to make a prisoner in the Residency, it is not improbable that Jenkins had recourse to treachery.

After the imprisonment of the Raja, evidence flowed in from all the quarters of the globe, as it were, to incriminate him. Intelligence was alleged to have been received, "through Mr. Elphinstone, from Bajee Rao's camp, of a letter having reached the Peishwah from Appa Sahib, written in his own hand, explaining his circumstances and proposing a combined movement." Only credulous persons and dishonest diplomats could pin their faith on the truth of such intelligence. But every rumour, every story, however absurd, against the Raja, was to be eagerly swallowed as gospel-truth when it served the purpose of the Company's servants to do so. Appa Saheb, who had been reduced to a position of perfect impotency, was totally incapable of all those designs of which he was suspected.

As regards the allegation that the Killadars of Chouragarh and Mundela offered resistance to the British troops because they had been secretly dictated to do so by some higher authority, there is hardly any evidence worthy of credit to prove it. It is said that the Killadars on their trial justified their conduct as they had secret orders from the Raja to do so. The Raja was made a prisoner on the 15th March and the trial of this Killadar of Mundela took place about a month after that date. Knowing that the Raja was a prisoner in the hands of the British, and also that he was in disgrace and that it was the intention of the British Government to depose him, no one having the least particle of common sense in him would doubt that the Killadar said what he knew would not only lead to his acquittal but would immensely please his victors. And he was not wrong in his surmises.

As said before, Appa Saheb was not given any opportunity to say anything in his defence. He was not tried for the crimes with which he was charged. He was condemned unheard by one whom he had looked upon as standing "in the relation of a father to him" and by another whom he "always called his brother." It was decided that he should be kept a state prisoner in the fort of Allahabad, and the infant grandson of the late Raghuji Bhonsla was to be placed on the *masnad* of Nagpur. This arrangement suited the convenience of the British Government, for during the long minority of the new Raja, the affairs of the Nagpur State were to be managed by the Resident.

The treaty of subsidiary alliance then with the Nagpur State was extremely beneficial to the Government of India:—it enabled them to be masters of nearly half of the territory of that principality and that, too, of a very fertile tract of it. The Governor-General wrote :

"The province of Garrah Mundelah, of which Jubbulpore is the principal town, and Sohagpore to the north of the Nerbudda, as well as the adjacent districts of Hoosingabad, Seonce, Chupara,

and Gurwarah, to the south of that river, formed the chief part of the territory proposed to be ceded to the British Government, according to the preliminary engagement concluded by Mr. Jenkins with Appa Sahib."

The gross revenue of the Nagpur State amounted to about sixty lacs, but that of the proposed cessions was not less than 28 lacs. The Governor-General wrote :

"You will observe that the gross revenue of the cessions fixed by the provisional engagement amounts to nearly twenty-eight lacs of rupees, while the net revenue is calculated at about twenty-two and a half lacs annually."

No wonder that Appa Sahib was desirous of giving up the whole of the Nagpur State to the British and of being content to live on a pension from them.

The subsequent events in the life of Appa Sahib, after he was sent as a prisoner to be confined in Allahabad fort, need not detain us long. He was not destined to be an inmate of that fort. He had experienced treachery and perfidy in the conduct of his allies, in whom he had reposed implicit confidence. How bitterly in his after-life he repented the day or rather the midnight hour, when he concluded the treaty of subsidiary alliance with the British Government, an alliance which brought nothing but misfortune to him and ruin to the fertile principality of Nagpur!

Had Appa Sahib been acquainted with the English language, he would have no doubt credited Burke with prophetic vision into the future, so far at least as the behaviour of the British Government related to him. In the course of his speech on the 1st December 1783, on the motion for going into committee on Fox's India Bill, Burke said :

"With regard, therefore, to the abuse of the external federal trust, I engage myself to you to make good these three positions : First, I say, that from Mount Imaus ... where it touches us in the latitude of twenty-nine, to Cape Comorin in the latitude of eight, that there is not a single prince, state, or potentate, great or small, in India with whom they have come into contact, whom they have not sold. I say sold, though sometimes they have not been able to deliver according to their bargain. Secondly, I say that there is not a single treaty they have ever made which they have not broken. Thirdly, I say that *there is not a single prince or state who ever put any trust in the Company who is not utterly ruined* ; and that none are in any degree secure or flourishing but in the exact proportion to their settled distrust and irreconcilable enmity to this nation

"These assertions are universal : I say, in the full sense universal. They regard the external and political trust only, but I shall produce others fully equivalent in the internal."

From his own experience of the treatment he had received at the hands of the British, he must have also formed the same opinion which was so eloquently given expression to by Burke long before he had attained his state of manhood. No wonder that he tried to escape from the bondage imposed upon him by the British.

And escape he did. The manner in which he eluded the vigilance of the escort which was carrying him a prisoner to Allahabad reads more like a romance than a real incident. The escape of Appa Sahib, being pursued by the troops led by European officers, his finding an asylum in the Courts of some of the ruling princes of those days in India, his wandering as a *fakir*, ought to serve as meet subjects for some talented poet, dramatist or novelist to exercise his pen. Regarding the escape of Appa Sahib, the Marquess of Hastings wrote :

"I deeply regretted the escape of Appa Sahib on account of its tendency to keep unsettled the minds of a portion of the inhabitants of the country, but from all the information that I had obtained,

I was satisfied that his personal qualities and character were not calculated to render him dangerous, and the contempt into which he had sunk had stripped his name of the influence which often attends that of a prince in a similarly fallen condition. I foresaw that even should he, after emerging from the fastnesses where he remained comparatively secure from our attack, continue to elude the efforts for his recapture, he would soon be reduced to the situation of a powerless unregarded fugitive, totally deprived of means to injure our interests."

The Marquess of Hastings, nevertheless, had taken great pains to recapture him but totally failed in his attempts. Had there been at that time in India any powerful and independent native sovereign, Appa Sahib's fate would have enlisted his sympathy, and the Governor-General would not then have been able to write regarding him in the manner in which he did in the extract given above.

Appa Sahib, as said before, was brought a prisoner to the Residency on the 15th March, 1818. Jenkins, without giving him an opportunity to say what he had to say in his defence, or even waiting for further instructions from the Governor-General, wrote on the 17th March (*i. e.*, two days after his making the Raja a prisoner) a despatch which was received at three o'clock A. M., on the 20th March, at Jubbulpur, in which he said :

"I have now, from many proofs of intrigues, found it necessary to seize the person of the Rajah, and I shall send him immediately by Jubbulpore to Lord Hastings. He will have four companies of the Twenty-second and a squadron of cavalry; and I must trouble you to relieve the squadron with one of your regiment from Chupra or Dhooma. By the time His Highness reaches Bellary or Lohargong, I fancy his destination will be pointed out by Lord Hastings. As it is of consequence to send the Rajah off soon, I have no time to write for other reliefs, but probably you will know where to write to get your squadron relieved."

The destination of the Raja, as said before, was the Allahabad fort. But he escaped from the camp of Rachuri. To quote from the Marquess of Hastings' letter of the 17th October, 1822:

"He (the Rajah) went off in the dress of a sepoy between two and three o'clock in the morning, accompanied by six sepoys of the Twenty-second regiment who had been on guard over him, and had been debauched to aid his flight.....The ex-Rajah had three horsemen with him.

"A reward for the apprehension of Appa Sahib was immediately proclaimed by the Commissioner, .....

"It appears that Appa Sahib reached Hurrey, a hill fort south of Chouragurh, on the night of the 14th : but that he speedily continued his course to Buthurgurh, where there was a force of his adherents collected, obviously on the contemplation of his escape, amounting to about a thousand well-armed men. At this post, however, he made but a short halt, proceeding to join the Gonds in the Mahadeo hills. Those clans of mountaineers, it would seem, had been prepared to expect him. The new Rajah of Nagpore had by this time been seated on the guddee : but although his elevation was generally hailed with satisfaction by the population of the country, a strong party was understood to be confederated in the city for the cause of Appa Sahib. Subsequent intelligence was received that the ex-Rajah, supported by the Gonds, had taken possession of the fort of Chouragurh, not finding resistance offered by the handful of men who garrisoned it : also, that he had a vakeel at Boorhampore entertaining Arab soldiery, which could not have taken place but by the connivance of Sindia's Governor of that city.

"Shortly after Sir John Malcolm reported that one Sheo Persaud, a man of family in the Nagpore State, but latterly serving with Bajee Rao, communicated to him the disposition of Appa Sahib to surrender himself, if Sir John Malcolm would pledge his word for Appa Sahib's security against



imprisonment or indignity, and would obtain for him wherewithal to maintain himself decently in retirement. This was represented on the faith of a confidential servant despatched by Appa Sahib to engage Sheo Persaud's undertaking the negotiation. Sir John Malcom added that he had rred the matter to Mr. Jenkins. Government immediately apprized Sir John Malcolm that it would plight the assurance solicited, would allow an income to support Appa Sahib decorously as a private individual of rank, and would promise him all becoming attentions, if he would take up his residence within the Company's provinces. As reference had been made to Mr. Jenkins, that gentleman was informed of this determination on the part of Government, and he was instructed to intimate,..... that a lac of rupees was the annual allowance which Government would fix for Appa Sahib in the event of his submission.

"These overtures were clearly made by Appa Sahib with a view of ensuring an eventual resource, should he fail in the intrigues which he was at the same time actively prosecuting.....

"In the meantime the Resident at Nagpore had communicated his having detected a correspondence maintained between Appa Sahib and his connexions by marriage residing in that city. They were working indefatigably to enrol and organize bodies of armed adherents in the interior, while they supplied Appa Sahib with money for the collection and payment of troops on the frontier.....

"The machinations of Appa Sahib were indeed carried to a wide extent. His designs to raise the province of Chutteesgurh into insurrection were timely discovered and frustrated : similar detection attended his underhand endeavours to excite hostile disposition in Raja Keerut Sing and other chieftains, against the British Government. His correspondence with Sirdars in the Bhopaul service was at the same time discovered, and Sir John Malcolm reported that Amrut Rao Pandit was employed at Oojein in various intrigues for Appa Sahib.....

".....Towards the latter end of October, Lieutenant-Colonel Adams projected a combined irruption of different columns into the Mahadeo hills, for the purpose of surrounding Appa Sahib, and he moved accordingly. The situation of the ex-Rajah became more critical: therefore he fled from the hills, escorted by a body of horse under Cheetoo Pindarry, to avail himself.....of repeated invitations from Jeswant Rao Lar for Appa Sahib's taking refuge in Asseergurh, should he be doubtful of maintaining his ground among the Gonds.....

".....Sharply pursued in his retreat from the Mahadeo hills, Appa Sahib was overtaken close to Asseergurh, his escort was routed, and he with his followers must have been taken, had not a part of the garrison sallied and saved the fugitives from their pursuers.....

"Cheetoo got away to the jungles, where he was devoured by a tiger.....

"A curious circumstance now occurred. Appa Sahib found means to open secretly from within the fort of Asseergurh a correspondence with Sir John Malcolm, expressing his inclination to surrender himself. As he met frank encouragement, yet did not act upon it, there is no way of accounting for his having thus negotiated, but by supposing him to imagine that, in case of the fort being taken, he might efficaciously plead a purpose which he never really harboured, the voluntarily putting himself into our hands. That he had not the intention of throwing himself upon our generosity is manifest, from his having preferred to make his escape to Boorhampore in the disguise of a fakeer. He was guided by a sepoy, the adopted son of one Hurrey Sing, who resided in Boorhampore under the protection of the Governor. The latter's concurrence in Appa Sahib's reception in Boorhampore could not be doubted. Concealment, however, could not be expected to last long: so that Appa Sahib was counselled to put himself beyond the reach of British preponderance. He consequently proceeded to Lahore, where he has been allowed to live in absolute privacy on a very scanty allowance from Runjeet Sing. That prince, in affording shelter to Appa Sahib, has done it in a manner which shews a sincere attention not to dissatisfy the British Government.....

The Marquess of Hastings' narrative regarding the whereabouts of the whilom Nagpur sovereign ends here. But Appa Saheb did not live long on the bounty of Ranjit Singh at Lahore. H. H. Wilson writes:

"Upon the withdrawal of his (Ranjit Singh's) countenance, Appa Saheb had recourse to a petty Raja, the Raja of Mundi, beyond the first range of the Himalayas, and was suffered to remain there unmolested for several succeeding years. At a subsequent date he returned to Hindustan, and was protected by the Raja of Jodhpur, who was allowed to grant him an asylum, on condition of becoming responsible for his safe custody and peaceable conduct." \*

The same author writes again in another part of his history :

"The ex-Rajah of Nagpore, Appa Saheb, had been tempted to quit his asylum in the mountains about the time of the agitation which prevailed in India at the close of the Burmese war: and after various adventures, took sanctuary in the temple of Maha Mandira, a celebrated shrine in the territory of Jodhpur. The Raja was at first required to secure the fugitive and deliver him to the British Agent at Ajmere, but he declined compliance, pleading in excuse his inability to infringe upon the privileges of the temple, and his fear that he should be for ever disgraced in the estimation of all Hindustan if he were to refuse to an unfortunate prince the rights of hospitality. The excuse was admitted, and the demand urged no further, but Man Sing was held responsible for the conduct of his guest, and expected to restrain him from any attempts to disturb the public tranquillity. Some obscure intrigues were set on foot by Appa Saheb with individuals of no note, who engaged to accomplish his restoration to sovereignty, but neither the persons nor the projects were of a character to endanger the security or excite the alarm of the Government of Nagpore."

\* *Loc. cit.* p. 27

## CHAPTER LVI

### THE WAR WITH HOLKAR

A decade before, the English had to conclude peace with Holkar on terms which were very favourable to that prince. Jasavant Rao Holkar died insane before the Marquess of Hastings landed in India and there were disorders and confusion in the principality after his death. The Governor-General thought that it was a very favourable opportunity to humiliate the house of Holkar. The Rajput princes had been turned into feudatories. The Jat princes in the Doab had been reduced to the status of British subjects. Sindhia had been made, in the manner mentioned before, to accept the treaty dictated to him by the Marquess. So, not having any fear in the rear, the Governor-General prepared to attack the territories of the house of Holkar. Some Afghan military adventurers and mercenaries were in the employ of that prince, foremost amongst whom was Amir Khan, whose name has been several times mentioned before. He was undoubtedly in the pay of the English, one of whose historians writes :

"Among the chiefs who received favour from the English was one Ameer Khan, . . . . . Holkar's chief general, to which office he had risen from the condition of a private horseman. This person had, inspite of previous treaties, a considerable portion of Holkar's territory made over to him by Lord Minto, and a formal treaty sealed the bond of amity between this desperate robber and murderer and the East India Company. Although Lord Minto engaged the alliance of this person, it was not until the Government of the Marquis of Hastings that the plunder was perpetrated upon Holkar in his favour, and a treaty formed to secure it to him through no less a personage than Mr. Metcalfe. One passage of Ameer Khan's history will illustrate the character of the man, and the morality of English policy in those days, for there was no pressing necessity to force the English into alliance with him to the disadvantage of other chiefs really worthy of their protection and amity. This Ameer Khan had been literally hired to murder one Sevaee Sing by a potentate who was the rival of the latter. The Ameer found in this commission an employment to his taste, and... accomplished it."<sup>\*</sup>

The above-named historian would not have expressed surprise at "the morality of English policy in those days," had he remembered that the Christian power in India had its origin in treachery and murder, for the Company's servants in the eighteenth century in India encouraged traitors like Mir Jafar and murderers like Raghoba, without whose support they would not have been able to establish their Empire. The same writer says that

"The intrigues between the English and Ameer Khan against the integrity of Holkar's dominion were not honourable to our nation. In connection with them, all persons about the court, all parties in that state, intrigued for and against the English, and against one another. Perjury, perfidy, abduction, assassination, murder, plunder, revolt and civil war rent and stained realms which had owned the sovereignty of the once far-renowned Holkar."<sup>†</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> Nolan's *History of the British Empire*, Vol. II, pp. 510—511.

<sup>†</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 521.

It was under such adverse circumstances that the Holkar's army, without any capable leader was attacked by the British and the battle of Mahidpur was fought on the 20th December 1817 in which Holkar's army was routed.

The gallantry and military tactics of the British generals would not have succeeded in gaining the battle of Mehidpur had they not been helped by a traitor in the camp of Holkar. In his Autobiography Lutfullah asserts that the battle was won only through the treachery of the Nawab Abdul Gafur Khan who was son-in-law of Amir Khan. He writes :

There would have been a host of about ten thousand armed men to destroy the foreigners, had they lost the battle, but all these hopes were frustrated by news of a contrary nature, which appeared to them incredible at first, considering the strength of Holkar. Little did they know that Nawab Abdul Ghafoor Khan played the part of a traitor to his master, and deserted the field of battle with the force under his command just at the moment when the English were on the point of losing the battle through the loyal and gallant exertions of Roshan Beg the Captain-General of Holkar's artillery. The stain of this disgrace clung too firmly to the name of Abdul Ghafoor as long as he lived to be effaced by his great liberality towards the poor and others : and his son Ghazi Mohamed Khan is not unreprieved by the natives of India for his late father's misbehaviour though he enjoys the district of Jaora assigned to the family through the favour of the British authorities in India. \*

The treaty of Mundisoor, negotiated by Malcolm reduced Holkar to the position of a feudatory and he henceforth never appears in the pages of Indian history as a menace or an object of terror to the British.

Malcolm was rewarded for his diplomacy by being appointed to manage the affairs of the territories which were wrested from Holkar.

Although Malleeson has not included the battle of Mehidpur amongst the decisive battles of India it was in reality one of them. In his paper on Central India under British Supremacy published in the *Calcutta Review* for 1850, Sir Henry Durand wrote :

After the battle of Mehidpur, not only the Peishwas but the real influence of the Mahratta States of Holkar and Scindia, were dissolved and replaced by British supremacy.

## CHAPTER LVII

### THE END OF THE THIRD MARATHA WAR

The hill fortresses of Central India were almost impregnable before the invention of modern destructive weapons of war. Regarding these hill fortresses Lieutenant Lake wrote in his Journals of the Sieges of the Madras Army :\*

Nothing is necessary, but a determined Garrison to render such positions perfectly impregnable. Fortunately for us, this latter requisite was wanting.....

Regarding the fortress of Rajdeir the same author writes .

"The Engineer in reporting to the Commanding Officer the result of his reconnaissance, declared his opinion that, from the great natural strength of this rock, a Garrison of 200 determined men supplied with the requisite provisions, etc., might bid defiance to the largest and best appointed army and that its fall must therefore depend on some fortunate occurrence which might intimidate the Garrison into a surrender.

Regarding the surrender of this strong fortress, the same author writes :§

The immediate cause of the surrender of the fortress, was a quarrel which took place in the Garrison originating in the Brahmin Killedar's refusal to pay to the families of three men who had been killed the arrears of pay due to them. In revenge for this the Garrison set fire to his house and the manner in which the flames spread, alarmed them so much, that they were induced to capitulate

Again, regarding the capture of the fortress of Trimbuck, the same author writes (p. 107) :—

It is difficult to account for the want of resolution displayed in the defence of this impregnable fortress. The reasons for it must be sought in the effect produced on the minds of the Garrison by our rapid advances to the foot of the scarp and by seeing their escape prevented by the works on the south side. The absence of their Prince at this time a fugitive surrounded by British Armies and the extreme improbability of his ever returning to his own dominions, must also have produced an unfavourable effect on the spirit of the Garrison and prevented them from attempting a more protracted resistance. Seventeen other forts fell on the surrender of Trimbuck, and the whole of this country *perhaps the strongest in the world* came into our hands in a few weeks almost without a struggle.

In contemplating such pusillanimous conduct, even on the part of our enemies, it is difficult to repress a feeling somewhat resembling disappointment. The idea unavoidably arises that nature intended these hills for other men, and other deeds. She seems to have marked them out as a theatre, on which the battles of freedom and independence might be successfully fought for amongst them the undisciplined and half-armed Native would be on a par with the most skilful and experienced veteran and even in the stones which cover them, nature has furnished abundant arms for their defence. If these ideas and the stern character of the scenery which gave rise to them, seem little consonant with the habits and dispositions of the Natives it should be remembered that even in India the asserters of liberty have been found and that it was from these

P. 90.

*Ibid.* p. 92.

§ P. 97.

very hills, that Sevajee first endeavoured to break the iron bonds, in which his countrymen were held by Aurangzebe. It was amongst these hills, that his enterprises were planned, and from them, that his "living cloud of war was poured forth." It was here, that he laid the foundation of that Power, which in after times retaliated, upon the fallen Emperor of Delhi, the injury, which the intolerant spirit of that Prince's ancestors had inflicted on the Hindu world; and here, the last Mahratta sovereign might have made an effectual struggle for independence, but the spirit was wanting, with which the great founder of the tribe had armed his people for conquest. Thirty fortresses, each of which, with a Sevajee as a master, would have defied the whole Anglo-Indian army, fell unresistingly in a few weeks: and this vast Mahratta Empire, which had overshadowed the East, and before which the star of the Mogul had become pale, was destined to furnish in its turn another great example of the vicissitudes of fortune, and of the instability of the mightiest thrones, the foundations of which are not laid in the affections of the people."

After the surrender of one of the hill forts, namely, that of Talneir, want of humanity was exhibited by the British officers, when every man in the Fort was put to the sword. Regarding this barbarity, Lake writes in his Journals (p. 57):—

"On the justice of the sentence passed on the killedar and his Arab commander, and on our right to inflict it, were I qualified to pass an opinion, I should feel little disposed to do so, but I may be permitted to deplore, in common with all friends of humanity, that some Ambassador more polished than a British Grenadier, and one acquainted with the language and customs of the Arabs, had not preceded the storming party, to explain to them the terms on which they were to be admitted to quarter...."

The keepers of those fortresses were not often true to their salt and surrendered them, because, in most cases, they must have been bribed to betray their charge.

Asirgarh, one of the strong hill-fortresses of Central India, held out till the 7th April 1819, when, by its surrender, the last Maratha war came to an end. Unfortunately, it was garrisoned mostly by Arab mercenaries who lost nothing by its surrender. Its strength was such that the besiegers made hardly any impression on the besieged, as is evident from the fact that of the latter only forty-three were killed and ninety-five wounded, for the rock and the upper fort towered so high above the batteries of the English that only shells reached them with any effect.

Raja Appa Saheb of Nagpur was reported to have found shelter in the fort of Asirgarh. So, on its surrender, it was thought he would be found there. But, to the great disappointment of the English, he was not there.

It was the occidental diplomacy of Malcolm which made the campaign in Central India terminate so favourably to the Company.

## CHAPTER LVIII

### THE MARQUESS OF HASTINGS AND THE NAWAB OF OUDH

The Nawab Vazir of Oudh was the only Indian potentate who was not shorn of his territories by the present Governor-General of India. If anything, he was made much of by the Marquess of Hastings, for he was raised to the dignity of a king, and a district which had been wrested from the Nepalese, was added to his kingdom. But the Governor-General did not do these things out of love for that Muhammadan prince. Scheming, intriguing and plotting as that Marquess was, whatever he did was from motives of political expediency and with an eye to his own benefit or some pecuniary advantage resulting to the Company whose servant he was.

At the time when the Marquess of Hastings was sent out as Governor-General of India, Ghazi-ud-deen Hyder was the Nawab Vazir of Oudh. His life was made a burden to him by the Christian Resident, named Major Baillie, attached to his court, who was practising all sorts of refined brutality on him. That the position of the Nawab Vazir was not an enviable one, is evident from what the Governor-General himself has recorded in his private journal, under date, October 13, 1814. \*

"Nawab Vizeer had reckoned on being emancipated from the imperious domination of Major Baillie under which his Excellency groaned every hour, but that I had riveted him in his position. Major Baillie dictated to him in the merest trifles, broke in upon him at his palace without notice, whensoever he (Major Baillie) had anything to prescribe, fixed his (Major Baillie's) creatures upon his Excellency with large salaries, to be spies upon all his actions; and above all, lowered his Excellency in the eyes of his family and his subjects by the magisterial tone which he constantly assumed."

However, the Nawab Vazir, in the simplicity of his heart, placed unbounded confidence in the so-called good intentions of the East India Company. So when the Marquess of Hastings visited Lucknow, he was treated right royally and the Vazir even went to the length of calling him his father. The Nawab Vazir was made to pay or rather to advance a loan of one crore of rupees and in exchange for this he was given a territory which did not pay one-sixth of the interest which an investment in the Company's funds would have yielded him.

But then the father promoted his son to the dignity of a king. Here again, he did not do it from any disinterested motive or excessive love for his son. The Nawab Vazir did not benefit in any way from the title of king conferred on him. Major Archer in his work named *Tours in Upper India* (London, 1833), writes :

"In 1819, Ghazee Hyder, the then Vizier, desired the dignity of king, which being acquiesced in by the British Government, though upon the express stipulation that the assumption should not be the means of altering the existing relations, he was crowned King in October of that year."†

\* Panini Office Reprint, p. 97.

† Vol. I, p. 2.

Major Archer was present at the coronation, and has described it as an occasion on which "the lord of misrule was in his full potency."

Incidentally, it might also be mentioned here how determined the Marquess of Hastings was to degrade the position of the Emperor of Delhi. A dozen years had hardly elapsed since the Government of India of that day had considered it necessary to intrigue with this descendant of the house of Babar to gain its object, and now that that object had been gained, it was thought proper by this Governor-General to treat the Delhi sovereign with scant courtesy, if not with positive rudeness. He writes in his journal, under date of January 22, 1815.\*

"Mr. Metcalfe arrived from Delhi. The king had been carrying on a wearisome negotiation with him to obtain that I should visit him. Mr. Metcalfe always returned the same answer,—namely, that I had expressed myself as very desirous of paying my personal attentions to his Majesty, but had told him (Mr. Metcalfe) that I was restrained from doing so by the knowledge that his Majesty expected my acquiescence in a ceremonial which was to imply his Majesty's being the liege lord of the British possessions. This dependent tenure, Mr. Metcalfe assured him, could never be acknowledged by him.....It is dangerous to uphold for the Mussalmans a rallying point sanctioned by our own acknowledgment that a just title to supremacy exists in the king of Delhi. . . . The house of Timour had been put so much out of sight that all habit of adverting to it was failing fast in India, and nothing has kept up the floating notion of a duty owed to the imperial family but our gratuitous and persevering exhibition of their pretensions—an exhibition attended with so much servile obeisance in the etiquettes imposed upon us by the ceremonial of the court."

Regarding this shabby treatment of the Delhi Emperor, Major Archer, in his work already quoted above, wrote :

"That he likes us (the English) the least, there is no doubt, for from our grips his Kingdom can never be wrested, to return again into his own keeping :...His authority they (the British) have long since refused but it was stealthy duplicity, honouring him as long as it was found convenient, and, when no longer requiring the aid of the King's name, that *tower of strength*, they summed up their acknowledgments within the compass of a pension. Those who defend the Company say, that the King would have been worse used by any of the victorious Native powers, thus making the scale of evil the rule of conduct. They acted from motives of pure generosity, perhaps, but merchants are but too rigorous appraisers of profit and loss. On this chapter of accounts, their arithmetic is seldom in error. Let it be stated also, that the King has been horn of his beams of royalty, his revenues have been seized and converted to the use of strange his authority everywhere abrogated but in his own immediate family, in short, he has lost all his rights, powers, and privileges, everything but the name of a King, and King, too, of Hindustan, for the munificent exchange of twelve lacs annually! How pleasant it would be to the rulers of the land to see the heir of the Great Timour defending himself *in forma pauperis* in the petty court for the recovery of small debts in Calcutta."†

\* Panini Office

† Vol. I p.



## CHAPTER LIX

### POLITICAL ASPECT OF THE MARQUESS HASTINGS' ADMINISTRATION

Of the trinity of the Governors-General who extended the dominions of the British in India during the first half of the nineteenth century, it must be admitted that the means adopted by the Marquess Hastings appeared in the eyes of the Indian people less objectionable than those of Wellesley or Dalhousie. He appealed partly to arms and not solely to fraud in depriving Indian princes of their territories. And everything being considered just and proper in love and warfare, he has not been so severely handled, and his conduct censured by historians, as were Wellesley and Dalhousie. Perhaps the war with the Gurkhas was not of his own seeking; it might have been forced upon him.

But it cannot be denied that he provoked the Maratha princes to war, which, taking all the facts and circumstances into consideration, must be pronounced to have been an aggressive measure on the part of the Governor-General. He was prompted to undertake the war for his own personal gain and distinctions as well as for making the British Government of India, the head of what he was pleased to call the "Indian Confederacy." The following record in his *Private Journal* should be adduced in support of the above statement:

"February 1st, 1814.

"Our deficiency in point of numbers might be balanced by the goodwill acquired from neighbouring powers through our justice and moderation, whence we might look to security against attack. I find nothing of the sort. We are engaged in capitious bickerings with all around us. On my taking the reins of government into my hand seven different quarrels likely to demand the decision of arms were transferred to me. Of these Machery, Rewah, Sawant-Warri, and Kurnool have required military operations. The results have been favourable, but except in the case of Rewah, where it was necessary to punish the Sainghar chiefs, who had waylaid and massacred a party of our sepoys, not one of these enterprises presents an object which (putting the justice out of the question) was worth the effort. . . . A much more important consideration is that these paltry triumphs leave an inveterate spirit of animosity towards us in the breast of those whom we have overborne.

"A rational jealousy of our power is not likely to excite half the intrigues against us which must naturally be produced by the wanton provocations which we have been giving on trivial subjects to all the states around us.

"With a degree of concert thus indistinctly fashioned, those states must be ready to start up into combination whenever they may see us occupied with an enemy capable of employing our forces for any time. It may not be long before such an enemy may exhibit himself. The terms of amity on which we at present stand with Ranjit Singh are no guarantee against those projects which his known dislike of us, and his confidence in his own strength, have probably made him revolve in secret. Having reduced all the other communities of the Sikhs beneath his sway, and having subjected all the other territories in his vicinity, he possesses a force which the turbulence of his disposition will impel him to use, and there is no field for its exertion but the part of the British Dominions bordering on the Sutlej. Should the King of Ava, who conceives his armies to be irresistible, at the same moment invade Chittagong, the opposing those attacks at the two extremities of our empire must ungarnish our prodigiously extended flanks. Then, there would be an opening for all the vengeance of the petty states to which I have alluded, as well as for the

rapacity of the Pindaries. Such a juncture might be the signal of general effort against us without any apparently adequate cause of war. We have not simply to look to the irritation of those whom we have actually scourged with nettles. Each sovereign must have brought the case home to himself, and must have secretly sympathized with the durbars which he saw insulted and humiliated. The Nawab Vizir imagined himself to have purchased exemption from these petty but galling vexations by the cession of a large part of his dominions—a cession made under the assurance of his being perfectly independent in what remained. We have been authoritatively interfering with all the minor concerns of his domestic rule, till we have driven him to a desperation which he proclaimed in open durbar. The Rajah of Berar, nominally our friend, has evinced repeatedly his hostile suspicion of us. The Nizam does not disguise his absolute hatred of us, though he is in shackles whence he cannot extricate himself. The Rajah of Mysore and the British Resident are engaged in a contest of mutual crimination. Scindiah is in the utmost difficulty to find means for keeping his army together, and nothing could be to him a temptation equal to the occasion of plundering our opulent provinces.

"Amir Khan, who wields Holkar's forces, is professedly inimical to us.

"Holkar's dominions being exhausted, his army must ravage some other country, otherwise it will dissolve, and he is now negotiating with the Pindaries for a joint attack on Nagpur. This object, on a former occasion, was held so eventually injurious to us that Lord Minto raised an army to march (though under no obligation of a treaty) to protect the Rajah, and baffled the undertaking. I have not money (the Company having no credit in Calcutta) to equip an army even if I saw the policy, as Lord Minto did, of defending Nagpore. Yet I am aware of the possibility that apprehension might make the Rajah suggest to those who are threatening him, a more attractive object for their views by offering to join in an extensive combination for the invasion of our possessions.

"In short, I see around me the elements of a war more general than any which we have hitherto encountered in India.

"This formidable mischief has arisen from our not having defined to ourselves or made intelligible to the native princes, the quality of the relations which we have established with them.

"In our treaties with them we recognise them as independent sovereigns. Then we send a resident to their courts. Instead of acting in the character of ambassador, he assumes the functions of a dictator; interferes in all their private concerns; countenances refractory subjects against them; and makes the most ostentatious exhibition of this exercise of authority. To secure to himself the support of our government, he urges some interest which, under the color thrown upon it by him, is strenuously taken up by our Council; and the Government identifies itself with the Resident not only on the single point but on the whole tenor of his conduct. In nothing do we violate the feelings of the native princes so much as in the decisions which we claim the privilege of pronouncing with regard to the succession to the musnud. We constantly oppose our construction of Mahomedan law to the right which the Moslem princes claim from usage to choose among their sons the individual to be declared the heir-apparent. It is supposed that by upholding the right of primogeniture we establish an interest with the eldest son which will be beneficial to us when he comes to the throne. I believe nothing can be more delusive. He will profess infinite gratitude as long as our support is useful to him; but, once seated, his subsequent attachment will always be regulated by the convenience of the day. He, too, will in his turn have to feel our interference in the succession as well as in minor instances. With regard to the latter it might be argued that some interest of the Company is always really involved. The simple existence of such an interest is not the true question. What should be considered, is whether the matter be of a proximity or magnitude to make the prosecution of it desirable at the expense of the disgust and estrangement which you sow by the procedure.

"If a willing obedience to the influence of our Government be deemed an essential point, all subordinate concerns ought to be indifferent."

"February 6th, 1814.

"Our object ought to be, to render the British Government paramount in effect, if not declaredly, so. We should hold the other states as vassals, in substance, though not in name, not precisely as they stood in the Mogul Government but possessed of perfect internal sovereignty and only bound to repay the guarantee and protection of their possessions by the British Government with the pledge of two great feudal duties.

"First, they should support it with all their forces in any call. Second, they should submit their mutual differences to the head of the confederacy (our Government) without attacking each other's territories. A few subordinate stipulations on our part, with immunities secured in return to the other side (especially with regard to succession), would render the arrangement ample without complication or undue latitude. Were this made palatable to a few states, as perhaps it easily might, the abrogation of treaties with the powers who refuse to submit to the arrangement would soon work upon their apprehensions in a way that would bring them at last within the pale of the compact. The completion of such a system, which must include the extinction of any pretension to preeminence in the court of Delhi, demands time and favourable coincidences. While on the other hand the difficulties bequeathed to me are imminent, and might break upon me at any instant. A new Government always produces some suspension in animosities. I have endeavoured to improve the juncture by courteous and conciliatory language to the native powers, and I do hope I may remove considerable soreness. As for the rest, fortune and opportunities must determine, but it is always well to ascertain to oneself what one would precisely desire had one the means of commanding the issue."<sup>\*</sup>

His declaration to undertake the war for the extermination of the Pindaris was merely a blind to conceal his real object, which was nothing else but that of destroying the power of the Marathas. In the words of a British historian of India, John Malcolm Ludlow, who writes :

"Thus ended the second (or third) Mahratta war,—the last great struggle carried on by the English against the Marathas as a nation. One by one all the Maratha princes had been checked or subdued by force of arms. Yet it is difficult to repress the feeling, that the war, commenced as against each particular chief by some aggression on his part, was rendered inevitable by the proceedings of the English. To assemble 100,000 men for the extirpation of 30,000 ill-armed freebooters, the operations having to be carried on in the heart of the Mahratta country, must have seemed, to each Mahratta prince, a direct threat against him. That there was no previous coalition on their part against us is clearly proved by the desultory nature of their proceedings, even when in the presence of a common danger they might try to combine."<sup>†</sup>

The war resulted in the Governor-General becoming richer to the tune of several thousands of pounds than when he had landed on the shores of India. In acknowledgment of the glorious issue of the Maratha war, the East India Company voted the Marquess of Hastings £ 60,000, for the purchase of an estate to be settled in such manner as might perpetuate the memory of his great services.

The territories added to the Company's Government extended over 50,000 square miles. The whole of the Peshwa's dominions, excepting that portion of the country which was set apart for the Raja of Satara, came under the sway of the British. The Sindhia, Holkar and Nagpur princes were mulcted of their rich and fertile provinces, and all these territories came to be designated under the euphonious title of "Central Provinces and Central India."

<sup>\*</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>†</sup> *History*, Vol. II, pp. 32—33.

Even the Rajput princes, as price for the protection they had solicited at the hands of the British were made to contribute both in cash and in land and thus came into existence the province of Ajmere.

Lord Hastings never cared for ameliorating the condition of the natives of India whom he was sent out to govern. His guiding principle seems to have been to enrich himself and his employers and indirectly his country at the expense of the people of India. It was during his administration that the industries of India were mostly ruined by unjust taxes and exactions. Ludlow writes

Some very unscrupulous measures to say the least, in customs' legislation belong, however also to this period. In the first place, the manufactures of India were, it may be said, deliberately ruined by a general lowering or total abolition of import duties on articles, the produce or manufactures of Great Britain without reciprocal advantages being given to Indian produce or manufactures when brought home. \*

He sanctioned the Ryotwari System in Madras, which has done more than anything else to abase the population of that presidency. Regarding the introduction of the Ryotwari System Ludlow writes

The system of finance with which Sir Thomas Munro's name is inseparably connected has worked more deeply than all other causes put together to 'abase' the whole population which was made subject to it to render the natives more abject and less able to govern themselves for like Lord Wellesley's plan of protection and Subsidiary Alliances it had this one fault, that it ignored human nature. Very fascinating indeed was the thought of taking account, year by year of the cultivators' circumstances asking no more of him but precisely what he could afford at the particular time. True but it presupposes only these few little things. 1st. That the Government shall have at its disposal an unlimited number of angelic officials perfectly familiar with the languages and customs of the country: 2nd. That such angelic officials shall possess illimitable leisure and should be capable of unerring punctuality in their movements: 3rd. That to such angelic officials of unlimited leisure and unerring punctuality the whole revenue functions of the Government shall be confined †

It should be remembered that Sir Thomas Munro was no friend of the Indian people, for he could write with a light heart:

I have got Vettel Hegada and his heir-apparent and his principal agents hanged and I have no doubt that I shall be able to get the better of any other vagabond Rajah that may venture to rebel. §

He was the apt pupil of General Wellesley who wrote to him  
as to the wishes of the people, I put them out of the question.""\*

Sir Thomas Munro it is needless to say, always acted on this advice. Sir Thomas is also given credit for his advocating the employment of Indians in the public services of their country.

Sir Thomas Munro is also given credit for the evidence he gave before the Parliamentary Committee of 1813 on the occasion of the renewal of the Charter of the

\* Part II, pp. 43-44.

*Ibid.*, pp. 37-38

§ Gleig's Life of Munro, Vol. I., p. 270.

*Ibid.* p. 266.

East India Company. This evidence was not given from disinterested motives. It was meant to strengthen the hands of his employers against those co-religionists and compatriots of his who were clamouring for the abolition of the monopoly of the Company and for the free influx of Britishers into India to civilize the "heathens of that land.

It may be urged in defence of Lord Hastings that he himself had no hand in sanctioning the Ryotwari System, for he had merely to carry out the orders of his employers, the Directors of the East India Company. How greedy they were of earthly riches and in what light they looked upon their Indian possessions, will be evident from the following extracts from Financial Letters to Bengal 6th September, 1813 and 23rd September 1817. In the latter the Court observes :

We must explicitly apprise you, that it is to India only that we look for the supplies necessary to enable us to defray the home territorial charges, by the punctual repayment to the commercial branch of all sums advanced by that branch for territorial purposes in England and again we cannot contemplate without alarm the possibility of the case assumed by you however hypothetically that eventually it would be your duty to show that however valuable India would still remain to England even in a pecuniary point of view, as the course of lucrative commerce and as paying a vast tribute in the returns of private fortunes, yet she demanded in return some aid from England to enable her revenues to bear the expenses necessary to preserve her.

With reference to the above, H. H. Wilson writes :

"Divested of all circumlocution, this is an assumption that the people of this country (England) should be taxed for the sake of supporting Indian commerce and of enabling private individuals in India to acquire fortunes an assumption which we are confident this country would utterly reject. \*

It was to enrich England that India's interests were to be sacrificed. To quote the same historian again :

The Customs had somewhat declined, but this arose from a measure adopted shortly after the renewal of the charter by which, in consequence of orders from home, the duties were generally lowered and a variety of articles, the produce or manufacture of Great Britain wholly exempted from any charge upon their being imported into India. As similar immunities were not granted to the manufactures or products of India in the ports of the United Kingdom, this was a piece of selfish legislation in which the interests of the dominant country were alone consulted and those of the subordinate dependency deliberately injured the latter being not only deprived of a legitimate source of revenue, but being further exposed to an unequal competition under which native industry was already rapidly declining. Some compensation was made to the country by the augmentation of its commerce.

Then in a footnote he adds :

It might be argued, that India benefited by the reduced price of the commodities imported from Great Britain, in proportion to the amount of the duty remitted. But this was disadvantageous in another respect, as it rendered the articles of domestic production still less able to compete with foreign articles in the market, and further discouraged native industry. The competition was unfair. India was young in the process of manufacture, and was never likely to improve if her manufactures were to be crushed in their infancy. Could time have been allowed for the acquisition of experience and the introduction of machinery her cotton fabrics and her metals would probably have been saleable in her own markets for a less cost than those of Europe. A native sovereign would undoubtedly have given India a chance by the imposition of protective duties. †

\* *The History of British India*, Mill and Wilson, Vol. 8, p. 400.

† *Ibid.* p. 397.

Had Lord Hastings been possessed of any conscience, he would have strongly protested against all these unjust measures ; and if his protest were of no avail, he should have resigned the office of Governor-General of India, rather than be an instrument in destroying the prosperity of the millions of India's inhabitants.

While, no doubt, he was guilty of much unnecessary bloodshed, and the miseries he inflicted on many Indian princes, nobles, and chiefs, he should be given the credit of a foresighted statesman in that he gave the warning that the frontiers of the British Empire in India should not be pushed to the river Indus and the countries around and beyond it. The conquest of Sindh could have been very easily accomplished by him and that, too, without in any way enhancing the reputation of the British for bad faith, (as the subsequent conquest of that country by Sir Charles Napier undoubtedly did), had he been inclined to do so. When during his administration, the little principality of Cutch was drawn into an alliance with the British Government of India, which therefore commenced to interfere in the affairs of that State, the Ameers of Sind were naturally alarmed by having the English as their neighbours.

H. H. Wilson quotes from manuscript records the views of Lord Hastings regarding the extension of the boundaries of the British Empire of India to the banks of the Indus.

"Few things," the Government of Bengal remarked, "would be more impolitic than a war with Sindh, as its successful prosecution would not only be unprofitable, but an evil. The country was not worth possessing, and its occupation would involve us in all the intrigues and wars, and incalculable embarrassments of the countries beyond the Indus. Hostilities might become unavoidable hereafter, but it was wise to defer their occurrence as long as possible."\*

How devoutly one could have wished that these views had prevailed in the councils of his successors, like Bentinck, Auckland, Ellenborough and Dalhousie. That would have saved India millions of money and thousands of lives, besides which all those provinces would have enjoyed independent existence and consequently the happiness which independence alone confers.†

\* *Ibid.*, p. 316.

† It was Metcalfe who induced Lord Hastings not to go to war with the Sindhians. Kaye in his "Selections from the Papers of Lord Metcalfe" (pages 146—148) has given extracts from Metcalfe's Minute on this subject. Kaye says:—"These last extracts are made from the draft of a paper, drawn up in 1819 or 1820, for Lord Hastings, when Metcalfe was Political Secretary. A party of Scindians, on their way through Cutch to Bombay, had been attacked by a body of our people in pursuit of plunderers; in revenge for which the Scindians devastated a village in Cutch. This affair wellnigh occasioned a war between the English and Scindian powers, but the amicable counsels fostered by Metcalfe, which prevailed at Calcutta, averted hostilities for a time. He lived, however, to see and deplore the rupture which subsequently converted Scinde into a British principality."

## CHAPTER LX

### RECALL OF THE MARQUESS OF HASTINGS

The Marquess of Hastings was recalled from the Governor-Generalship of India, because he was not an honest man. Writes Torrens in his *Empire in Asia: How we came by it: A book of Confessions* (pp. 290—291, Panini Office Reprint):

"To meet the military expenditure which four successive campaigns had entailed, the Governor-General was obliged to raise money on any terms that might be demanded from an insolvent treasury. He borrowed largely from the Vizier of Oude, and when other securities were not forthcoming, he sold him the provinces left from the Goorkhas,—the foolish Sadat Ali forgetting that he who gave for a valuable consideration could take away without one. Provinces and their inhabitants were treated as chattels by this chivalrous statesman of the superfine court of the Regency, who being a man of sentiment and honour, and not as other men, might do, in short anything he pleased. It pleased him to sanction a near relative becoming a partner in the financial house of W. Palmer and Co., at Hyderabad, whose usurious dealings with the Nizam were of a nature to call forth the denunciation of the Court of Directors, as being utterly regardless of the limits of decorum. The newly made Marquis defended Palmer and Co. as injured and insulted individuals and challenged the investigation of accounts which had been framed upon figure-proof principles. The friends of the Viceroy relied upon his character as a man notoriously indifferent as to money to show that he could not have been in any way to blame in the shameful business at Hyderabad. Had he not squandered his patrimony, nobody knew how, and then offered to govern India for the benefit of his creditors? Could anything be more gallant or unsordid? And was he not now "most noble?" The Nizam, it is true, was simply fleeced by a firm of whom the Viceroy's relation was one. But no one could believe that the Marquis knew anything of the transactions, and the tenderness of his domestic affections forbade him to think evil of his kinsfolk. So the Nizam was robbed, and Lord Hastings came home, and,—that was all. Lord Amherst, who succeeded to the Government in 1823, was not a fine gentleman of the George IV. school, but was only an honest man, and one of his first acts, therefore, was to lend the Nizam money to liquidate his debts to Palmer and Co. which he did upon condition that the Court of Hyderabad should have no more dealings with the firm, soon afterwards compelled thereby to suspend their commercial enterprises. The conqueror of the Gurkhas and the Marhattas reappeared in London society as badly off as ever, and after having seized and occupied for a season the throne of Tamerlane, he was glad to take the Governorship of Malta as a sinecure pension for his closing days."

## CHAPTER LXI

### THE ADMINISTRATION OF LORD AMHERST (1823—1828)

The Marquess of Hastings, without waiting for the arrival of his successor from England, left India for good. The senior member of the Supreme Council was appointed to officiate as Governor-General till the arrival of the permanent incumbent of that post. Mr. Adams, who happened to be senior member, was brought up in the atmosphere of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy, and the free expression of opinion by the public press was distasteful to him. He did not like to leave it free and untrammelled, but being clothed in brief authority exhibited his power by forcibly shipping off one Mr. J. S. Buckingham to Europe, whose offence was that he had published in the *Calcutta Journal*, of which he was the editor, some remarks on a Scotch clergyman which the acting Governor-General did not like.

Happily, Mr. Adams' tenure of office was only for seven months ; for on the first August, 1823, Lord Amherst landed in Calcutta and was installed as Governor-General.

The choice of the authorities in England did not at first fall on Lord Amherst as successor to the Marquess of Hastings. They offered it to Mr. George Canning, on whose refusal at first and then on his inability to come out to India, Lord Amherst was appointed to that office.

Lord Amherst derived his title from his uncle, who gained the baton of field-marshal, and, for the high reputation he acquired as Commander-in-Chief of the army in America from 1758 to 1764, was rewarded with a peerage. So the Governor-General could not boast of being the son of a peer, or of blue blood coursing in his veins.

Lord Amherst had been a few months only in India when he declared war against Burma.



## CHAPTER LXII

### THE FIRST BURMESE WAR

To understand the causes and circumstances which led to the First Burmese War, it is necessary to go back to the period when Minto was the Governor-General of India. During his tenure of office, persons living within the territory of the East India Company invaded the kingdom of Burma and returned with their spoils to India. The chief of these raiders was one Kingberring. His antecedents are thus described by Minto and his colleagues in a despatch to the Court of Directors of the East India Company, dated the 23rd January, 1812 :

"In the early part of the past year a native of Arracan, named Kingberring, whose ancestor as well as himself possessed lands to a considerable extent in that province, near the frontier of Chittagong, and who in consequence of his having incurred the displeasure, and been exposed to the resentment of the King of Ava, took refuge with a number of his followers in the district of Chittagong, about fourteen years ago meditated the design of embodying those followers, as well as the other Mugs, who many years since emigrated from Arracan, and invading the latter province. This project he actually carried into execution in the month of May 1811, having either by persuasion, or by intimidation, induced a large body of the Mugs, settled in Chittagong, to join his standard."

Under the circumstances it was natural for the authorities of Burma to believe that the invasion of the province was instigated and supported by the British Government. The latter did not offer any compensation to the Burmese Government for the injuries suffered by its subjects, but sent an envoy "to undeceive the Burmese Court, with regard to" the British Government's "supposed participation in the proceedings of Kingberring."

Minto had also another object in view in sending the envoy to Burma.

"Independently, however, of the importance of this object founded on the solicitude of Government to avoid being placed in a state of war with the Kingdom of Ava, it appeared to be essential also with reference to the safety of the British subjects and British property at Rangoon."

The depressed state of the Company's finances did not allow Minto to follow in the foot-steps of Wellesley and go to war with the neighbouring states. But he tried to achieve his object by diplomacy and sending to different powers ambassadors, whose profession was to lie as well as to spy out the strength of the Courts to which they were accredited.

Captain Canning was selected for the situation of an Envoy to the Court of Ava. He had been twice before to Burma, first in 1803 as British Agent at Rangoon, and a second time in 1809, to explain the nature of the blockade imposed upon the trade with the Isles of France. He was therefore peculiarly qualified for the duty of Envoy and was appointed as such on a salary of Rs. 1500 a month. He proceeded to Rangoon in the latter end of September 1811, in the ship *Amboyne*, under an escort consisting of 112 Sepoys, and taking with him presents of the value of Rs. 10,000 for the King of Burma.

The authorities in Burma entertained the belief that a large force of Mugs under Kingberring could not have been collected in a British province, nor the invasion have taken place, without the knowledge and participation of the British Government. The belief was very strong in the minds of the Burmese authorities and owing to that conviction a few British ships were seized and detained at Rangoon. At the same time a Burmese envoy was also despatched to Calcutta for making representation on the subject of the transactions in Arracan.

The British ships were subsequently released. Captain Canning ascribed their liberation to the effect of the personal interests of the Viceroy of Rangoon, "who, deeply engaged in commercial speculations, was averse to the adoption of measures tending to disturb the relations of amity between the two states."

Negotiations were also carried on between the representatives of the Raja of Arracan and the Magistrate of Chittagong. The Burmese authorities demanded the surrender of Kingberring and other insurgent Mug refugees, together with the Civil Surgeon of Chittagong, named Dr. M. 'Rae, against whom the charge was preferred by the Raja of Arracan of having patronized Kingberring. From the manner in which the Burmese authorities persisted in accusing the British of instigating the invasion of Arracan, it does not seem improbable that they might have done so.

What must have strengthened their belief was the manner in which the emigrants from Arracan were treated in Chittagong. It is on record that in the years 1797 and 1798, between thirty and forty thousand persons emigrated from Arracan into the Chittagong District. An officer, Captain Cox, was employed to superintend their location, and the situation in which they were located was subsequently known as Cox's Bazar. The natives of Arracan were encouraged to emigrate into the Company's territory of Chittagong by lands being assigned to them sufficient for their maintenance. H. H. Wilson (Vol. IX, p. 11.) writes that "the Government of Bengal had resolved to admit the emigrants to the advantages of permanent colonisation, and assigned them unoccupied lands in the southern portion of the district." These fugitives used to disturb the peace of the Burmese Kingdom.

Lord Minto and his councillors also admitted the just grounds of complaint of the Burmese against the British Government. In their despatch to the Court of Directors, dated the 1st August, 1812, they wrote:

"The State of Ava had sustained a deep injury at the hands of men who were under our authority and protection, and derived their means of committing it from our territory. The Burmese Government had, therefore, some plausible reason for charging us with a participation in that injury. Under this impression, its officers conceived they had a right to demand the surrender of the immediate perpetrators of the outrage."

The demand of the Burmese authorities for the surrender of Kingberring and other Mug insurgent chiefs was not an unjustifiable one—indeed, it was founded on precedents. For some twenty years previously, that is, in 1793, when some insurgent Burmese chiefs of note fled into the Company's territory of Chittagong, they were delivered to the Burmese authorities and were dealt with according to the laws of their country.

But the British Government was not willing to do that reparation to the Burmese which the laws of nations declare just and equitable to the aggrieved party. Captain Canning was playing the part of a spy. He was taking note of the military strength of the Burmese Government. He proposed to his Government to enter into something like subsidiary alliance with Burma and thus to reduce it to the position of a feudatory state of India. In their despatch to the Court of Directors of the East India Company, dated the 4th March, 1812, Lord Minto and his colleagues wrote:

"Captain Canning also relates, that antecedently to the arrival of the intelligence of the success of the Burmese arms against the insurgents, the Viceroy, in a private conversation with the envoy's interpreter, had remarked of what great utility a battalion of Sepoys would be in suppressing the insurrection, intimating, at the same time, that such a force, if furnished by us, would of course be paid for by the Burmese Government. . . . Captain Canning, . . . conceiving it not improbable that some such proposal might be made by the Court of Ava, and desirous to receive a communication of our sentiments on the subject, stated that without further specific orders from us he should of course decline acceding to such a proposal, but observing at the same time, that should it enter into the views of Government to obtain a preponderating influence in the Burmese dominions, the present was certainly the most favorable moment, as the weakness of the Government and general discontent of the people would put the whole country at the disposal of a very small British force."

The words which have been italicised in the above extract leave little room to doubt that Kingberring and other insurgents had been instigated by the British Government to invade the Burmese dominion with some ulterior object in view.

But Captain Canning had so well noted the military strength of Burma, that he even advised the British Government to go to war with the state. In their despatch to the Court of Directors, dated 1st August, 1812, Lord Minto and his colleagues write :

"The observations stated by Captain Canning . . . regarding the advantages with which the British Government would enter upon a contest with the power of Ava, were unquestionably well founded. The coasts and provinces of that country are certainly exposed to our attack without the means of defence, and the only part of our territory accessible to the Burmese forces might with ease be effectually protected. Of our complete and speedy success in the war, therefore, little doubt could be entertained."

But at that time it was not convenient for the British Government to launch on a war.

"We observed, that the expediency or in expediency of engaging in a contest with the state of Ava did not altogether depend upon the advantages with which it might be undertaken and the prospect of success, that great inconvenience and embarrassment would attend it with reference to other interests and exigencies of the public service . . . and we should consider the extension of our dominion to the Eastward and Southward to be more burthensome than beneficial, and that those considerations outweighed on the whole, at least at that time, the object which we allowed to be desirable, of checking the arrogance and presumption of that weak and contemptible state."

It is clear then why the British Government was so unwilling to make amends to the Burmese for the losses and injuries the latter had suffered at the hands of Kingberring and other domiciled fugitives of the Company's territory. The British Government were making preparations for a war with the Burmese, whom they were bent upon irritating and provoking to war.

What a successful spy Captain Canning proved to be is evident from Minto's dispatch, dated the 21st October, 1812, where Captain Canning is credited with

"acquiring that intimate knowledge of the internal condition of the dominion of Ava, the character of its government, and the state of its power and resources, which future events may render essentially important to the interests of the public service."

According to the diplomatic language of Minto and his councillors, Captain Canning's mission of Burma was a successful one. In their despatch of 21st October, 1812, they wrote:

"We observed, that we considered Captain Canning not only to have accomplished the objects of his mission in the utmost degree practicable under the disadvantages and difficulties arising from the ignorance and arrogance of the barbarous Government to which he had been accredited, by establishing at the Courts of Ummeerapoor and Rangoon the belief which, independently of his mission, they could not easily have been induced to admit, that the British Government had no concern in the invasion of Kingberring, and by obtaining in consequence the recall of the Burmese troops from the frontier of Chittagong, but to have rendered his mission subservient to purposes of a more general and comprehensive nature, by inspiring the Burmese authorities with juster notions of the character, principles and power of the British Government, by exacting the respect which was due to it, by supplying to those authorities motives of conduct calculated to restrain the ebullitions of their accustomed insolence and haughtiness, and to render practicable, a continuance of the intercourses of amity between the two states."

The unvarnished truth is just the reverse of the above, which is the language of diplomacy. Captain Canning did not inspire the Burmese "with juster notions of the character, principles, and power of the British Government," for had it been so, the war would never have ensued.

Year after year, whenever the season was propitious, Kingberring used to collect his adherents, the fugitive Mugs, and invade Arracan. The British Government made profuse promises to the Burmese authorities for his apprehension; but all these seem to have been mere show, for no systematic efforts were ever made to capture him—no efforts like those which were considered necessary to seize the leaders of the Pindaris and to crush their hordes. Uninterrupted or very probably secretly encouraged by the British, Kingberring and his followers committed depredations in the dominion of Burma, and when defeated, returned to, and found asylum in, the Company's territory. Their pursuit by the Burmese troops in the British district was strictly forbidden. This state of affairs continued for years. Kingberring, however, died at the commencement of the year 1815.

The news of the death of this insurgent chief was communicated by the British Government to the Burmese authorities. In the despatch from the Governor General in Council at Fort William in Bengal, to the Court of Directors of the East India Company, dated the 20th December, 1817, it is stated

"As the death of Kingberring was an occurrence of considerable interest to the Burmese Government, the Vice-President in Council was of opinion that a communication of the intelligence to the Governor of Arracan from the British Government would not fail to be regarded as an acceptable act of friendship, as well as a proof of the sincerity of the disposition which the British Government uniformly professed to discount the proceedings of the insurgents."

The death of Kingberring was expected to produce tranquillity in Chittagong and Arracan. But this was not to be. The mantle of Kingberring had fallen on other fugitive chiefs. So again the Burmese authorities made a demand for the surrender of the Mug insurgents. But a compliance with the demand was declined

"on the grounds of its being inconsistent with the principles of the British Government to deliver up a race of people who had sought protection in its territory, and had resided in it upwards of thirty years."

It is not improbable that the Burmese authorities, being insulted and slighted by the British, and their dominion being invaded by men whom they suspected of being instigated by the British, were inspired with feelings of hostility against the latter. They could not have gone to war with a strong Power like the British single-handed. Perhaps the Burmese Government sought an alliance with the native powers of India in order to expel the English from India. In the despatch from the Governor-General in Council to the Directors of the East India Company, dated the 24th June, 1813, it is stated:

"The probability of some extravagant scheme being in the contemplation of the Burmese Government was in some measure supported by the narrative of a merchant of Chittagong, who had lately returned to that station from Arracan . . . . The sum of the information collected from the merchant, . . . was, that a plan had been formed by the Burmese Government for uniting the principal States of India in a Confederacy against the British Government, with a view to expel the British force from India. . . . .

"Visionary and absurd as are the schemes ascribed to the King of Ava, we were not disposed to discredit the report of their being actually entertained by the ignorant, arrogant and barbarous government of that country."

It was suspected that emissaries of the King of Ava were intriguing with the Marathas. In the despatch from the Governor-General in Council to the Court of Directors, dated the 17th March, 1820, it is stated :

"The Governor of Merghege, a Burman chief of great eminence, had been permitted to visit the upper provinces for professed purposes connected with religion. There is reason to surmise that his real object was to ascertain the real strength and determination of the Marathas, in consequence of previous overtures from them ; and it is probable that he had adopted delusive notions of both."

We cannot blame the Burmese for the step they took. Indeed, they were compelled to adopt it in self-preservation. The English had been scheming for the conquest of Burma and their attitude to that State was anything but friendly. But the Marathas had been crushed and there was no other native power in India whose alliance could have been of any avail to the Burmese.

They turned their attention to Assam, where discord and dissensions were at that time the normal state of affairs. They imitated the English in their dealings with that State. They took advantage of the unsettled condition of Assam and annexed it to the Burmese Empire. This was considered a grievance by the English. In a despatch from the Governor-General in Council to the Court of Directors, dated the 31st July, 1823, it is stated :

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\* Papers relating to East India Affairs : *viz.*, Discussions with the Burmese Government, p. 116, paragraph 25.

"Your honorable Court will be apprised by our regular reports, that the Government of Ava has taken advantage of the dissensions prevailing in the Assamese territory, to obtain military occupation of the country, and to set aside its native princes, thus the Burmese nation has come in contact with our territories, at another and most inconvenient point, and by the possession of Assam they have acquired the command of the upper part of the Burrampooter."

Again in another despatch, dated the 12th September, 1823, It is stated :

"Mr. Scott's letter...contains some remarks on the subject of the occupation of Assam by the Burmese, which will, doubtless, attract the attention of Your Honourable Court.

"He observes, that the Burmese having obtained complete possession of Assam, and a person of that nation (Mengee Maha Silwa) having been appointed to the supreme authority, the country may now be considered as a province of the Burmah Empire, and although it appeared from Lieutenant Davidson's last letter that he was satisfied in regard to the amicable disposition of their commander, and that he did not consider any immediate reinforcement of his detachment necessary, yet the substitution of a warlike, and, comparatively speaking, powerful government, in the place of the feeble administration that formerly ruled Assam, in a situation so commanding, and with such extensive means of offence, would no doubt render it necessary that some permanent measures should be adopted for the future security of the Rungpore frontier, and of the country on the lower parts of the Burrampooter, Megna and Ganges.

"From the account of the equipment of the Burmese forces furnished by Lieutenant Davidson, he conceived it obvious, that if inclined at any time to assert their claim to the Dacca province, or to plunder that rich country, it will in future be impossible for the British power, either effectually to oppose them, or to overtake them on their retreat, without some other description of force than troops unwilling, or unaccustomed to act both as boatmen and soldiers."

In the above will be noticed the anxiety of the English to go to war with the Burmese. That they even intrigued with the Assamese to expel the Burmese is evident from the following paragraph from the despatch from which extracts have already been made above :

"We informed Mr. Scott that we had long been sensible of the evil resulting from the conquest of Assam by the Burmese, and should view, with much satisfaction, any successful attempt on the part of its oppressed inhabitants to expel that people, but in the present state of our relations with Ava, no countenance could be given by us, directly or indirectly, to the efforts of the Assamese to recover their independence."

Of course, the above is couched in diplomatic language. If divested of the cloud of words, it means that they were doing everything in their power to provoke the Burmese to hostilities.

The Burmese were Buddhists by religion and so were not divided into castes as the Hindus of India. They were a compact homogeneous nation, and education was prevalent in Burma to a degree which was unknown in Christian countries at that time. It is evident that the Burmese were now bent upon extending their Empire. H. H. Wilson\* writes :

"The vigorous despotism of the government, and the confident courage of the people, crowned every enterprise with success, and for above half a century the Burman arms were invariably victorious, whether wielded for attack or defence. Shortly after their insurrection against Pegu, the Burmans became the masters of that kingdom. They next wrested valuable districts of the Tenasserim coast from Siam. They repelled with great gallantry, a formidable invasion from China, and by

\* *Narrative of the Burmese War*, pp. 1-2.

the final annexation of Arakan, Manipur, and Assam, to the empire, they established themselves throughout the whole of the narrow, but extensive tract of the country, which separates the Western provinces of China along the Eastern boundaries of Hindustan. Along the greater part of this territory they threatened the open plains of British India, and they only awaited a plausible pretext to assail the barrier, which in their estimation, as presumptuously as idly, opposed the further prosecution of their triumphs."

So the British were alarmed when the Burmese annexed Assam, for, to quote the above-mentioned author again :

"The vicinity of a powerful and ambitious neighbour was, therefore, substituted for a feeble and distracted state, and this proximity was the more a subject of reasonable apprehension as from the country being intersected by numerous rivers, and from the Burmas being equally prepared to combat by water as by land, it was at any time in their power to invade and plunder the British provinces, without its being possible to offer effective opposition or to intercept their retreat, under the existing constitution of our defensive force."

The British were not to be so easily nonplussed by the Burmese. They intrigued with the prince of Kachar, whom they intended to take under their protection. By this arrangement

"they were enabled to occupy the principal passes into the lower lands of Sylhet and thus effectively oppose the advance of the Burmas from the district of Manipur, which they had some short time previously reduced to their authority."†

The treaty was concluded between Mr. David Scott, Agent to the Governor-General, on the part of the Honourable East India Company, and Raja Govind Chander Naryn of Kachar on the 6th of March, 1824. By this treaty the Raja signed away his independence.

But this move on the part of the English precipitated hostilities with Burma. The British intended to execute the treaty to make Kachar as their base of operation against the Burmese in Assam. The whole of Assam was, as it were, within the sphere of influence of the Burmese. At that stage when the Burmese "prepared to invade Kachar," the intention on the part of the British of executing a treaty with that principality naturally offended them. H. H. Wilson writes :

"Notwithstanding the intimation of these determinations to the Burmese, they persisted in their purpose of invading Kachar, and thereby provoked the commencement of actual hostilities in that quarter."‡

The war was declared by the Governor-General against Burma on 5th March 1824.\*\* And the Treaty with the Raja of Kachar was executed at Buddeerpore on the 6th of March, 1824.††

So from the dates mentioned above, it is quite evident that the Burmese gave no reasonable cause of provocation to the British when they invaded Kachar, because that principality had not been then under the protection of the East India Company.

\* *Ibid.*, p. 16.

† *Ibid.*, p. 19.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

\*\* Alitchison's Treaties, 1st. Vol. (1st. Edition of 1863), p. 202.

†† *Ibid.*, p. 79.

From the side of Chittagong, for many years past, the Burmese had been molested. As narrated before, the British Government did not make any reparation or pay any compensation to the Burmese for the losses which they suffered at the hands of Kingberring and other Mug refugees who had found asylum in the Company's territory. It is small wonder then that they should now retaliate and insult the Company's Government in every manner possible. H. H. Wilson writes :\*

"Repeated instances of actual aggression had still more distinctly marked either their intention of provoking hostilities, or their indifference as to their occurrence. The chief object of these acts of violence were the elephant hunters in the Company's employ, whom the Burmas seized, and carried off repeatedly, under the pretext that they were within the territories of the king of Ava, a pretext that had never been urged throughout the long series of years, during which the Company's hunters had followed the chase in the jungles and hills of the Eastern frontier. In May 1821, the Burmas carried off from the party employed in the Ramoo hills, the Darogah, the Jemadar, and twenty-three of their men, on whom they inflicted personal severities, and then threw them into confinement at Mungdoo. . . .

...The same system of violences was adopted in another part of the Chittagong district, in order to maintain the pretensions to territorial jurisdiction, equally unfounded with those made upon the elephant grounds of Ramoo, in order to establish the right of the Burmas to the whole extent of the Naf river. ....The Burmas claimed the right of levying a toll upon all boats entering the mouth of the river, although upon the British side, and on one occasion in January, 1823, a boat laden with rice having entered the river on the West or British side of the Channel, was challenged by an armed Burman boat, which demanded duty. As the demand was unprecedented, the Mugs, who were British subjects, demurred payment, on which the Burmas fired upon them, killed the manjhee or steersman, and then retired. This outrage was followed by reports of the assemblage of armed men on the Burman side of the river, for the purpose of destroying the villages on the British territory, and in order to provide against such a contingency, as well as to prevent the repetition of any aggression upon the boats trafficking on the Company's side of the river, the military guard at Tek Naf, or the mouth of the Naf, was strengthened from twenty to fifty men, of whom a few were posted on the adjoining island of Shahpuri....

This was resented by the Burmans, and they claimed Shahpuri as belonging to their kingdom. The British authorities did not give a very satisfactory reply, but made a proposal to depute commissioners on the part of either Government to meet, not immediately, but some months afterwards to determine all questions respecting the disputed territory on the borders.

The British authorities not settling the matter at once led the Burmese to occupy Shahpuri by force. This was no doubt an affront to the British which they could not overlook. Accordingly, two companies of a native regiment (20th Infantry) were forwarded from Calcutta. They landed on Shahpuri on the 21st November and did not meet with any resistance from the Burmese.

"A proclamation was distributed at the same time, stating that the only object of the detachment was the re-occupation of the island, and that the intercourse of the people on the frontier should suffer no interruption from their presence. The force left on the spot was two Companies of the 2nd battalion 20th regiment native infantry, and two field pieces, six-pounders, on the stockade at Shahpuri, one company at Tek Naf, and the *Planet*, armed vessel, and three gun-boats, each carrying twelve pounder carronade, were stationed in the Naf.\*



By the re-occupation of the island of Shahpuri, the British prestige was restored. The Burmese at that time were not prepared to go to war with the English. But the military demonstration of the latter no doubt showed them that the British meant war with them.

Lord Amherst, who was the Governor-General of India at this period, was not an expert in military matters like his predecessor. It would seem that to emulate the conduct of the Marquess of Hastings, he was also bent upon war with Burma. He consulted the Commander-in-Chief on the matter. General Sir Edward Paget arrived in India as Commander-in-Chief in the winter of 1822. He had never served in this country before and was not well acquainted with the Company's officers and men. Being an autocrat, he did not like the manly spirit of the Company's officers. In his evidence before the Select Committee on the affairs of the East India Company, given on 8th May, 1839, he said:

"It is perfectly impossible for me (called upon to give evidence here) to conceal from this committee that there is a great spirit of insubordination in the army, at least that I had the opportunity of more particularly seeing, which is the Bengal army. A sort of spirit of independence prevails amongst the officers, which is totally inconsistent with our ideas of military discipline."

He wanted the officers to be cringing, subservient tools in his hands. It was he who should be held responsible for the Barrackpore Mutiny which resulted in the deliberate massacre of several hundreds of innocent sepoys. With that egotism and self-sufficiency which characterised Sir Edward Paget, it does not appear that he asked the Company's officers to furnish him with their opinions and advice regarding the Burmese affair.

Of course, he was a military man, and so it was not to be expected that he would give any advice which would preserve peaceful relations with the Burmese. No, he was for war, which is the royal road to fortune, honor and glory for military men.

Unfortunately Amherst and his council also listened to the counsels of the Commander-in-Chief, and so arrangements were adopted for carrying on the war with the Burmese. Sir E. Paget suggested that the course of operations on the frontier should be defensive that is, for the protection of the British provinces, and expulsion of the Burmese from the territories which they had wrested from the native princes of Assam while the offensive system should be an attack by sea on the Burmese coast.

According to the plan of operations recommended by the Commander-in-Chief, a large force was despatched to the frontier. No formal declaration of war had as yet been made by the British Government. So the plausible excuse for the despatch of the large force to the frontier was to render assistance to the Raja of Kachar. It has been pointed out before that the treaty with the Raja of Kachar was not concluded till the 6th of March, 1824, while the despatch of troops was taking place towards the close of the year 1823.

A brush of the British force with the Burmese who had invaded Kachar was inevitable.

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\* Ibid., pp. 90-91.

The Burman armies entered Kachar in different directions and it was considered necessary to resist their progress, before they occupied positions which would give them the command of the Sylhet frontier. Without making any representations to, or remonstrance with the Burmese, the civil authority on the frontier of Assam advised the British officers to oppose the advance of the Burmese by force, and so hostilities ensued.

Before the declaration of war, and without sufficient *cousus belli* for, as said above, the East India Company had not executed any treaty with the Raja of Kachar, the British took the offensive and were guilty of the breach of friendly relations which till then existed between the Governments of Ava and India. Irritated by the conduct of the British, and smarting under the provocations which the Burmese Government had been receiving at their hands for a number of years, they perhaps did not show that diplomatic etiquette towards the representatives of the East India Company, which international laws enjoin on every state.

After the withdrawal of the British detachment from the island of Shahpuri in January 1824, the Bengal Government deputed Mr. Robertson and Captain Cheap to meet any persons whom the Burmese government might depute to define and settle the boundary. They had arrived at Tek Naf when the Raja of Arrakan sent four persons to meet them. The Burmese envoys very reasonably urged as a preliminary condition of the Conference that the island in dispute should be allowed to be considered as neutral, and to be occupied by neither power. This reasonable demand of the Burmese was not attended to by the British authorities, and hence the Burmese envoys returned to their own country, without settling the disputed boundary.

The Burmese authorities seized Mr. Chew, the commander of the *Sophia*, a pilot vessel which had been sent after the withdrawal of the detachment from Shahpuri, to serve as a substitute for the troops removed from that island. Mr. Chew, with some of the native seamen, was taken prisoner to Arrakan, and as a condition for his release, the Burmese authorities asked for the chief Mug refugees to be delivered to them. He was kept at Arrakan from the 20th January to 13th February, when he was sent back.

This arrest of a British officer formed the chief ground on the part of the English for the declaration of hostilities against the Burmese.

The British had been making preparations for the war since some time past, and now without demanding any explanation or reparation from the Burmese for their conduct in seizing Mr. Chew and native seamen, they declared war with Burma. The Governor-General in Council issued a long declaration, dated 24th February 1824, the text of which is inserted in full in Mill and Wilson's History of India, Vol. IX, p. 397 *et seq.*

Regarding this war, Major Archer, (*Tours in Upper India, and in parts of the Himalaya Mountains*), wrote\* :

"The Ava war, entered upon in all the hurry of fear, was of course not guided by judgment, either in the plan of operations or the most fitting time for commencing them. But I will not here

\* Vol. II, p. 238.

repeat the absurdity which characterised the doings of the Indian Government, which with all the good nature of fancied over-strength, gratuitously told the Burmese of the intended attack : and in the extensive preparations of some months gave the enemy ample time to make the best defence in his power. If ever the bull was taken by the horns, it was on this occasion."

We agree with the above-named author in thinking that the war was unnecessary. He writes :\*

"It may be deemed a bold assertion, that the war was wholly unnecessary, especially with respect to the circumstances of responsibility and importance which accompanied it from the commencement to the termination. In the first place, the Government was most profoundly ignorant of the country, its resources, and its means of offence and defence ; and the only authority upon which it built the structure of its policy, was the narrative of 'Symes's Embassy to Ava' and the reminiscences of an officer who had accompanied it. To the latter, implicit confidence was yielded and vast influential authority delegated ; but it was quickly perceived that he several points of information gathered in the previous visit to Ava, were not of the slightest use in the present state of affairs, and the utmost of the knowledge acquired sufficed only to take the fleet abreast of the town of Rangoon.

Captain Canning's report, which has already been referred to before, misled the Indian Government respecting the military strength and fighting capacity of the Burmese. In fact, that officer had urged the Government to go to war with Burma, and had represented that such a war would not be attended with any difficulties for the British.†

The plan of operations sketched by the Commander-in-Chief was pursued and troops were despatched to the frontier by road and to Rangoon by sea. The high-caste Bengal sepoy, to whom crossing the sea meant excommunication, were not sent to Rangoon. But the Madras sepoy, not so scrupulous about caste, was made use of for this purpose.

Sir Thomas Munro was the Governor of Madras at this time, and was asked to make all the necessary arrangements to equip and dispatch troops to Rangoon. He himself admitted in a letter to the Duke of Wellington, dated Madras, 18th September, 1824 :

"I was probably more surprised at hearing of the intended war than people at home will be,

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\* *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 801.

† When the war was finally decided upon, Captain Canning was consulted as to the best mode of conducting it. In a memorandum, dated Government House, March 4th, 1824, he advised the plan of advancing entirely by water. But some of the points discussed in his paper were not approved of by Sir Thomas Munro, to whom the paper was forwarded by Lord Amherst for perusal and opinion. In his letter to the Governor-General dated, Madras, 21st March 1824, Sir Thomas Munro wrote :

"I should certainly place more dependence on the ultimate success of an attack by Munnipoor than by Rangoon, because, though it may require more time, yet regular troops possess greater advantages against irregulars in acting by land than by water, and the success of their operations is not left to depend on their finding a sufficient number of boats."

Thus it will be noticed that the plan of operation recommended by Munro was diametrically opposed to that of the Commander-in-chief. Of course, Munro was a better and more trustworthy authority on all matters pertaining to India than Sir Edward Paget. Had Munro's advice been followed, much of the expense incurred on the war, would have been saved.

for I never had the least suspicion that we were to go to war with the king of Ava, till a letter reached the Presidency, in February last, asking us what number of troops we could furnish for foreign service. I thought that the local officers of Chittagong and Arracan might have carried on their petty aggressions on both frontiers for another year, and that they would probably have got tired and settled matters among themselves."<sup>o</sup>

The second sentence of the above extract clearly shows how unjustifiable was the war which the Indian Government had declared against the Burmese.

Munro did what he had been ordered to do by the Supreme Government. However, he gave a piece of advice which the Governor-General would have done well to act upon. In his letter to Lord Amherst, dated Madras, 25th February, 1824, he wrote:

"The distance between Calcutta and Madras making it nearly a month before an answer can be received to a letter, renders all sudden operations, in which the forces of both Presidencies are to co-operate, extremely liable to accidents, because there is no time for consultation or explanation, and under such circumstances, no operations are so liable to failure as maritime expeditions. A service of this kind requires, more than any other, that every equipment should be ample, because there can seldom be any medium between complete success and failure, partial success is little better than an expensive failure.

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"I must own, with the little information which I can be supposed to possess, I should think it better to avoid all inferior expeditions, to wait until we are fully prepared for the main one, and to undertake it with such a force as should leave no doubt of success. This would give time for the two Governments to communicate freely, and for the subordinate one to understand exactly what it was to do, and to make its arrangements accordingly, and it would be more likely, in the end, both to ensure success and to save expense. The occasional hostilities on the eastern frontier of Bengal might, perhaps, still be allowed to continue for some months without much serious inconvenience, and even if the Burmans brought a greater force to that quarter, it might divert their attention from the main object of the attack."<sup>†</sup>

But Amherst turned a deaf ear to the sound and wholesome advice of Munro. His Lordship replied to Munro's letter on 10th March, 1824:

"You have stated many reasons, which I acknowledge to be powerful ones, why the expedition should be deferred till further communication can be held between this place and Madras. I think they are overbalanced, not only by the consideration of the proper period for ascending the Irrawaddy River, and the impossibility of moving from Rangoon to Ummerapoora by land, but also by the security which an early blow would afford to our eastern frontier, and by a reference to the unprepared state in which we may expect to find the enemy."

So Munro had to obey the order of the Governor-General and arranged to send from Madras to Rangoon three regiments of Europeans and ten battalions of Native infantry. This was far in excess of what Amherst had considered necessary for the occupation of Rangoon. In the course of the letter from which an extract has been given above, his lordship wrote:

"We contemplate an attack on Rangoon as soon as it can be made, and have no reason to doubt that four or five thousand men will be sufficient for its capture and occupation. Of these we may be able to furnish from hence nearly three thousand. We should not require, therefore, from Madras, above two thousand native troops, with European and native artillery, and I should hope

<sup>o</sup> Gleig's *Life of Sir Thomas Munro*, 2nd Vol. (1831), pp. 220-222.

<sup>†</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

that these may be ready to sail from Madras by the 15th April,—say the whole reaches the rendezvous by the 1st of May. During the first week in that month they may be in possession of Rangoon."

Munro erred on the right side in sending a larger force than what Lord Amherst had asked for.

The Madras troops were placed under charge of Colonel McBean, who was granted the rank and allowances of a Brigadier-General.

The force by land had already been despatched to the frontier some months previously, where the operations were proposed to be limited to the protection of the British provinces and the expulsion of the Burmese from Assam. It was not considered advisable to immediately invade Arakan.

General Sir Archibald Campbell, a brother of Lord Combermere, was selected to be the chief command of the expedition, with Captain Canning as political agent.

The place of rendezvous selected for the two divisions of troops from the presidencies of Bengal and Madras was Port Cornwallis. Here the Bengal division, which were embarked at Calcutta between the 12th and 17th of April 1824, arrived at the end of that month. The greater portion of the Madras division arrived on the 4th of May. Orders were given for the sailing of the fleet the following morning, which on the 10th instant anchored within the bar of the Rangoon river.

The capture of Rangoon was not attended with much difficulty, as the place was not fortified and the Burmese authorities were not prepared for the British fleet. H. H. Wilson writes:

"At the river gate is a landing place, denominated the King's Wharf, in which situation the principal battery was placed, and opposite to which the *Liffey* came to anchor about two P. M. After a short pause, a fire was opened on the fleet, but was very soon silenced by the guns of the frigate. In the meantime, three detachments were landed from the transports of his Majesty's 38th regiment, under Major Evans, above the town, and his Majesty's 41st, under Colonel Mc Bean below it, whilst Major Sale, with the light infantry of the 13th, was directed to attack the river gate, and carry the main battery. These measures were successful. The Burmese fled from the advance of the troops and in less than twenty minutes the town was in the undisputed possession of the British." . . .

"Upon taking possession of Rangoon, it was found to be entirely deserted. The news of the arrival of the fleet had scarcely reached the town, when the population began to depart, and to secrete themselves in the adjacent thickets."

It was not on physical force alone, that is powder and shot and the sword, that the British depended for their success against the Burmese. No, they leaned more on the Machiavelian doctrines, to achieve their end. In his letter dated from Calcutta, 2nd April, 1824, Amherst wrote to Munro:

"The Siamese, inveterate enemies of the Burmese, would cause a most powerful diversion in the South. The aid to be derived from the Siamese, in the event of protracted hostilities, has entered deeply into our calculation. But I am not disposed, if we can possibly avoid it, to engage too largely in the intrigues and politics of the Indo-Chinese nations, or to enter into engagements which we are not prepared at all hazards to fulfil. . . . I am not at all sure that the dismemberment of

the Burmese empire, even if we had the means of effecting it, is an event to be desired. The balance is now tolerably equal between them and the Siamese, and they help to keep each other in order. The only tribe to which we have yet held out hopes of independence is the Assamese. . . It is highly desirable on every account that they should no longer remain subject to the Burmese yoke."

What could not be effected by force of arms was to be accomplished by means of Machiavelian policy. The British had thought that the capture of Rangoon would make the King of Ava sue for peace, and hence they had not made all those preparations which otherwise they would have done. Major Snodgrass writes :

"The arrival of a British fleet at Rangoon seems to have been wholly unexpected by the Court of Ava ; the town was unprepared for its reception, and the civil and military authorities thrown into alarm and consternation . . . it was, therefore, most desirable that no time should be lost in appearing before the town, which we sanguinely hoped would, by accepting of protection, at once place at our disposal the resources of the country in cattle, boats, drivers, and boatmen with which we were wholly unprovided. In boats especially, Rangoon was known to be well supplied, and it was by many anticipated, that should the king of Ava upon the capture of the chief commercial city, still refuse to make atonement for his wanton and unprovoked aggressions that city would afford the means of pushing up the river a force sufficient to subdue the capital and bring the war at once to a conclusion."

But the British met with disappointment. Machiavelian policy, for a time at least, met with no success. To quote the same author again :

"It has already been observed that the army came unprovided with the necessary equipment for advancing either by land and water, indeed it was anticipated that the capture of Rangoon alone,.....would induce the King of Ava to make overtures for peace, ...or at all events, that the country would afford sufficient water transport to enable a considerable corps to proceed up the Irawaddy towards the capital, ... nor were the reasons upon which these expectations of aid and assistance from the natives were founded without some weight. It was urged that they were not Burmese, but Peguers and a conquered people, living under the tyrannical sway of a Government with which they had for centuries, and often successfully, waged war, deprived of their court, and governed by despotic and mercenary chiefs, whom they obeyed from fear alone, represented† as discontented with their present situation, and ever longing for their former independence and finally, that they would easily be induced to join the invading force, and to aid it, by every means in their power in humbling the tyrant, under whose arbitrary rule they had so long suffered every species of degradation. But in these calculations, the well considered power and judicious policy of the Government towards its conquered provinces were overlooked, and the warlike and haughty character of the nation was so imperfectly known, that no correct judgment could be formed of our probable reception."

No, the Burmese, paying allegiance to Buddha, were not tyrants nor intolerant to votaries of other creeds, as they had been represented by Christians. Of the spirit

\* Narrative of the Burmese War, pp. 4 and 5. But Snodgrass is not a trustworthy historian. This an officer writing on "*A few recollections of the Ava campaign in 1824-25-26,*" in the *Meerut Universal Magazine* (Vol. I, pp. 60 et. seq.) says :

"The official Reporters were all personally interested in the War being continued, nor can the historians of that campaign be considered altogether impartial."

"Snodgrass (who left Calcutta with the expedition as Adjutant of the 88th) was *Post Master, Price Agent, Military Secretary, Political Assistant and Son-in-law*, and merely published a *Puff* on the family performances, civil and military."

Or, rather, misrepresented.

Snodgrass's Narrative, pp. 17-18.

of toleration in religious matters of the Burmese, the above-quoted author writes :

"Rangoon contains an Armenian and Portuguese church, a strong proof of liberality of sentiment in the Government, and of freedom from intolerance and religious prejudice in the people."

So the appeal of the Christian British to the Buddhist inhabitants of Rangoon to throw off the yoke of their lawful sovereign and seek their protection was in vain. The Burmese were not cowards and altogether devoid of military tactics. They did exactly what the Muscovites did when their country was invaded by Napoleon. From the neighbourhood of Rangoon the Burmese authorities had carefully removed everything that was likely to be of use to the British army. To quote the above-mentioned author :

Hid from our view on every side in the darkness of a deep, and, to regular bodies, impenetrable forest, far beyond which the inhabitants and all the cattle of the Rangoon district had been driven, the Burmese chiefs carried on their operations, and matured their future schemes with vigilance, secrecy, and activity. Neither rumour nor intelligence of what was passing within his posts ever reached us. Beyond the invisible line which circumscribed our position, all was mystery or vague conjecture."

Placed in these circumstances, it was difficult for the British to succeed. The Burmese were born soldiers and were given to guerilla warfare, of which the formation and defence of stockades formed the chief feature. These constructed in the most difficult and inaccessible recesses of the jungle which covered the greater part of the face of their country, were the means by which they carried on nightly attacks on the British forces, which greatly annoyed and inconvenienced the latter.

While the British force was in such a critical position in Rangoon, the state of affairs in Assam and the Arrakan frontier was no better. The British were acting on the Machiavellian policy in Assam. H. H. Wilson writes :

"On entering Assam, a proclamation was addressed to the inhabitants, encouraging them with the prospect of being released from the cruelty of their Burman invaders and assuring them of British protection. Several of the barbarous tribes in the eastern portion of Assam, as the Khamtis and Singphos, availed themselves of the unsettled state of affairs to harass the Burmas, but their operations were equally directed against the unfortunate natives of Assam, numbers of whom were carried off by them as slaves. The Assamese displayed the most favorable disposition towards the British, but their unwarlike character, scanty numbers, and reduced means, rendered their co-operation of no value."

The King of Ava placed a large force under the famous commander, Maha Mengyee Bundoola, who had established his head-quarters at Arrakan. This force, it is said, was composed of between ten and twelve thousand Burmese. In the beginning of May, a portion of this force, crossing the Naf, advanced to Rutnapullung, a place fourteen miles south of Ramoo.

On hearing of the advent of the Burmese force, the British also sent a detachment under the command of one Captain Norton to fight the Burmese. So, not far from Ramoo an encounter with the Burmese took place, in which the British were defeated

\* *Ibid.*, p. 14.

† Narrative of the Burmese War, p. 48.

The officer commanding the detachment was killed. The casualty list on the side of the British was a heavy one.

This defeat of the British at the hands of the Burmese produced a great panic in Calcutta, in fact throughout the British possessions in India. It was thought by many not impossible that the enemy might penetrate through the Sunderbunds to Calcutta. Major Archer in his work, which has been already referred to before, writes :

"The Supreme Government was actually afraid of a Burmese invasion of Calcutta by way of the Sunderbunds, and accordingly ordered an European regiment down the river for further protection."<sup>\*</sup>

This defeat of the British created a great sensation in India, as may be gathered from the paper which Metcalfe transmitted to the Governor-General, June 8, 1824, a few extracts from which are given below :

"Our great success in India has induced the systematic habit of despising our enemies, and thence we are liable to disasters and reverses from which otherwise we might be preserved by the actual magnitude of our power and extent of our resources.

"Our Indian Empire is owing solely to our superiority in arms. It rests entirely on that foundation. It is undermined by every reverse, however trifling, and would not long withstand any serious indication of weakness.

"All India is at all times looking out for our downfall. The people everywhere would rejoice, ... at our destruction : and numbers are not wanting who would promote it by all means in their power. Our ruin, if it be ever commenced, will probably be rapid and sudden ... From the pinnacle to the abyss might be but one step.

"The fidelity of our native army, on which our existence depends, depends itself on our continued success. . . .

"The Burmans have commenced the war with us in a manner which perhaps was little expected. They have the advantage of first success, and we have the disadvantage of disaster, which is likely, in however small a degree it may have taken place, to be of worse consequence to us than it would be to any other power in the world, because unremitting success is almost necessary for our existence.....

"It is evident that we have an insufficiency of troops within any moderate distance of the scene of invasion, and that the progress of the enemy has carried alarm to Dacca and even to Calcutta, where alarm has not been felt from an external enemy since the time of Surajah Doula and the Black Hole.

"We are engaged in a contest with the Burmans on the whole length of the Eastern frontier of our Bengal possessions. Our enemies appear not to be deficient in either spirit or numbers, and we must bring numbers as well as spirit to oppose them.....there is real danger to our whole Empire in India from the slightest reverse at any point whatever, if it be not speedily and effectually repaired. The intelligence spreads like wild fire, and immediately excites the hopes and speculations of the millions whom we hold in subjugation.....Let us put forth our strength to prevent further misfortune, and crush the evil before it be fraught with more extensive injury and greater peril."

The British tried in right earnest to repair the disaster which betell them at Rangoon. A greater number of troops, with more ammunition and other military stores, was despatched to the Frontier. But during the continuance of the rains, owing to the increased sickness of the men, the British force was compelled to retreat to Bhadarpur, where it

\* Loc. cit., p. 299.



remained inactive. The Burmese also were unable to move out of their entrenchment, to which they were confined by the rise of the rivers.

H. H. Wilson has censured the generalship of Bundula for not taking advantage of the victory of Ramoo and pushing on to Calcutta. He writes :

"Neither was much to be apprehended from the generalship that suffered the victory of Ramoo to pass away without making the slightest demonstration of a purpose to improve a crisis of such splendid promise, and which restricted the fruits of a battle gained to the construction of a stockade."

Here Wilson has suppressed a material fact which will account for Bundula's not pursuing the British forces in their retreat from Ramoo. He (Bundula) had been apprised of the capture of Rangoon by the British and so in hot haste he moved to that port town for its recovery. Major Archer writes :

"Bundoolah, the Burmese Chieftain, was in Arracan with a large force, advancing upon the Company's territories, but, hearing of the capture of Rangoon, he hastened to the scene of action, leaving orders for his army to follow with all speed.\*

The Burman empire was not so rich as the British Government of India. Unlike the latter, the King of Ava could not afford to spend money like water. Of course, the British Government of India was spending money wrung out of an alien people with which that Government had very little sympathy. Therefore there was small wonder that the Burmese Government could not send more officers and men to oppose the large hordes with whom the British had invaded their country. Under the circumstances, it is hardly fair to charge the Burmese Commander with bad generalship.†

It has been said above that the British Government had to send more troops to the seats of war to oppose the Burmese, who had been elated by their successes. It has been the policy of the British Government in India to treat the native troops as mercenaries. To them do not belong the honor and glory of war.

\* *Loc. cit.*, p. 305.

† It would seem from all accounts available that Bundula was anxious to pursue the fugitive British force to Bengal. In fact, that had been his cherished dream ever since he conquered Assam and made it part of the Burman Empire. Thornton (*History of the British Empire in India*, Vol. V, pages 95-96, footnote) writes :

"Mr. John Laird, a native of Scotland, who resided several years in the Burmese dominions for commercial purposes, made the following statement to Mr. Cranford :—"When I was in Ava, for the second time, in 1823, I was present at an evening levee of the king. The late Bundoola and several of his officers, who had just arrived from the conquest of Assam, were there. . . . Bundoola said, 'I pursued the fugitives across the Brahmapooter into the British territory : but as the English are on terms of friendship with your Majesty, and you derive a large revenue from their trade to Rangoon, I retired. But if your Majesty desires to have Bengal, I will conquer it for you, and will only require for this purpose the *kulas*, or strangers, and not a single Burman.'" So confident was the Bundoola of being able to perform what he suggested, that according to a statement of Major Snodgrass, he marched into Arracan, provided with golden fetters, in which the Governor-General of India was to be led captive to Ava."

The victory of Ramoo seemed to realise his long-cherished dream. But then, as a faithful servant, he had to obey the orders of his sovereign.

## CHAPTER LXIII

### THE BARRACKPORE MASSACRE

Although it was the Native Indian army with whose help the British succeeded in building up their Empire in India, yet it is a fact that the sepoy has been for long ill-treated in many ways and never treated sufficiently well by his foreign masters. It is not necessary here to dilate on the many virtues possessed by the swarthy and 'heathen' sepoy. These have been borne testimony to by all those who knew that person well. Almost all of the military witnesses examined before the Select Committee of the House of Commons held in 1832 to enquire into the affairs of India, spoke very highly of the Indian sepoy. Sir Jasper Nicolls, who rose to be the Commander-in-Chief in India answered the question put to him as follows :

12. What are the habits of the native soldier is he orderly and easily managed ?—Very much so his habits are very simple and he is very easily managed.

13. How as compared with European soldiers ?—I think the command of an European regiment would be more difficult than the command of a brigade of sepoys, it would be much easier to control 5,000 sepoys than it would be 1,000 Europeans.

Major General Sir Thomas Reynell, who had served in India from 1805 to 1825 gave, in his evidence, the following character to the sepoys :

They are subordinate they are patient and they are certainly obedient to their orders. I consider them to be animated by a good spirit and I have had a good opportunity of witnessing it in the late service before Bhurtpure. There I have seen them in the trenches working at very laborious employments and I believe, contrary to their own religious feelings I consider them, generally speaking, an efficient army, the Bengal army.

He answered the question,

271. Now as compared with the European soldier, I mean as to order and being easily managed ?—I think he is much more orderly than European soldiers in general from the mere circumstance of his not being so given to drink."

According to Major-General Sir Theophilus Pritzler, who had served with the Madras troops

There is no greater punishment that you can inflict upon a sepoy than to order him to be discharged.

It would seem that because the Indian sepoy was always a very docile animal therefore, perhaps he used to be ill-treated. The historian Lecky, in one of his well-known works has said:

A people who are submissive gentle and loyal fall by reason of these very qualities under a despotic government."

It is not necessary here to multiply instances to show the ill-treatment the sepoys have been subjected to. Suffice it to notice the grievances under which the sepoys generally and those of Bengal specially were smarting at the time of the First Burmese War of 1824.

The Bengal troops were, as regards pay, worse off than their comrades of Bombay and Madras. The pay of the former was only five and a half rupees a month while that of the latter seven rupees. Col. J. Munro, in his evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons held in 1832 to inquire into the affairs of the East India Company, answered the question,

"1043. Is that difference a matter of complaint or discontent?— . . . I have understood that the Bengal sepoy on some occasions have stated as a grievance, the superior pay received at all times by the Bombay and Madras sepoy."

Even in 1832, the pay of the sepoy compared with the wages of labour and price of subsistence was not very high. Sir Jasper Nicolls, in his evidence before the Committee referred to, answered the question,

"17. How is that (the pay of the sepoy) compared with the wages of labour and the price of subsistence?—The lowest servant of any officer gets four rupees, some as high as twenty, so *that in fact it is very low compared with servants*;" . . .

The same officer in answering the question to specify the particular advantages of Madras and Bombay over those of Bengal, stated:

"Under the Madras Presidency, upon every removal of a corps, they receive hutting money, eight rupees to a native officer, two to a private sepoy, which allowances are unknown in Bengal. The Madras sepoy is never more than 15 days in arrear, and if he is ordered to move after the 24th of any month, he is paid to the end of it: the Bengal sepoy a month and a half in arrear. The Madras sepoy, when grain exceeds a given sum, receives the difference for himself and the family from the Government. Native officers are very handsomely rewarded for meritorious actions, by extra pensions (for they are all entitled to pensions), grants of land, horses occasionally for cavalry service. Palanquins and an allowance for their carriage of 70 rupees a month, which is a great advantage and an honour, which allowances are unknown, with few exceptions, in Bengal. There are 70 recruit and pension boys upon each regiment, 30 recruit boys and 40 pension boys, children of soldiers, borne upon the strength of each corps at Madras; this is unknown in Bengal....

"There is a native adjutant to each battalion at Madras, which is certainly a benefit: promotion is very much quicker, and they are sent at an earlier period of life to the invalid corps or pension list, which though not a personal is a general advantage to that army. Bombay has also the same establishment of recruit and pension boys, the sepoy receive their full pay on furlough monthly, wherever they are, which the Bengal sepoy do not. They receive a higher rate of pension, they receive for their clothing, I think, three articles in two years, whereas the Bengal sepoy receives only two articles in two years. The Bombay sepoy, when he marches under command, receives nine and a half rupees a month, the Bengal sepoy eight and a half. The Bombay sepoy when he marches receives his *batta* three days before he sets out under command, and the Bengal sepoy on the day he sets out. *They are apparent trifles, but they are very important to a sepoy.* No deductions are made from the Bombay sepoy, who has had leave of absence, when he returns to his corps, from the Bengal sepoy there are. The Bombay sepoy receives presents on Christmas day, New Year's day and the King's birth-day, the Bengal sepoy does not. The Bombay sepoy, in taking up a new cantonment, receives two rupees, the non-commissioned officer four, the jemadar 12, the subdar 24, the Bengal officer nothing. The Bombay sepoy, on changing quarters, receives half the above allowance, the Bengal sepoy nothing. From the Bombay sepoy no deduction is made when he is in the hospital, from the Bengal sepoy one anna per day. The Bombay sepoy receives a coat every year, pantaloons every third year, the Bengal sepoy receives a coat and pair of pantaloons alternately. Thus the Bombay sepoy receives three coats and a pair of pantaloons in three years, and the Bengal sepoy two coats and a pair of pantaloons, or a pair of pantaloons

and a coat. The Bombay sepoy receives two yards of nankeen, a pair of sandals and cloth for a turban every year, which is unknown in Bengal. The knapsacks for the Bombay sepoy are found by the Government, not so with the Bengal."

So then it is clear that the Bengal sepoy had legitimate grievances against the Indian Government. But the sepoy as a class were not so fairly treated as the European troops then serving in India. The native sepoy did not receive any bounty on enlistment as did the British recruit. Then again, while the European soldier was provided with barracks in the cantonment, the native sepoy had to shift for himself, and to make his own hut.

Captain Balamain in his letter dated 31st March, 1832, to Mr. Villiers, published in the appendix to the Fifth Report from the Select Committee on the affairs of the East India Company, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 16th August, 1832, wrote:

"The European soldier is very well provided for in every respect and his situation, on the whole, is probably more comfortable than that of the private in any other country. The men ought only to be enlisted for a term of years."

But he could not give such a rosy account of the situation of the native sepoy, regarding whom he wrote:

"The native soldiery in the Company's service is composed of men of a great variety of country, caste and disposition. . . . They are easily managed by gentle treatment, but quite unnerved by harshness. . . . They are very sensible of disgrace or injury, particularly the Mahomedans. . . . The fear of being hastily punished by some young officer, or of being flogged for some purely military offence, prevents many men from entering the service, and it is remarked that of late years few native officers place their sons in the army. There is, I fear, no great attachment to the service. The causes of this are numerous. The prominent one, almost an unavoidable one, is the depression of the whole native soldiery. In an army of between 200,000 and 300,000 men, no native can rise above the rank of subadar-major, about equal to troop serjeant-major. There are many men of talent, more of spirit and ambition among them and these can never be satisfied with such a state of things; they have not only their own feelings to contend with, but they are continually taunted and excited by their countrymen not in the service. Could any safe opening, however small, be made for the advancement to higher office of some of the natives, it would have a most beneficial effect. Among the lesser causes of discontent are the frequent changes in dress and drill: the great strictness in little points of etiquette, the curtailment of liberty when off duty, the irregularity of relief of corps, the insults of the European soldiery, they being most frequently placed under the command of officers not acquainted with their manners and customs, and often regardless of them. . . . The insults of the European soldiery have increased from the more frequent reliefs of His Majesty's regiments. It originates in the ignorance of, and contempt for, what the men call "black fellows" and is chiefly felt by them on their first arrival. Thirty years ago, there was no such thing as the hanging of European soldiers for shooting natives, which is now so common: nor is there such a sight now to be seen as European and native soldiers walking arm in arm, and frequenting each other's barracks and tents, as used then to be the case."

Other eminent officers also gave evidence to the same effect. Thus, to quote Major General Sir H. Worsley on the subject; in his letter dated 30th March, 1832, to Mr. Villiers, he wrote:

"For the purposes of service or war I should deem it very desirable to have a larger proportion of troops armed and organized as light infantry. Nor can I omit the opportunity for observing, that

I have always considered the musket in general use for the infantry as cruelly heavy, burthensome and unwieldy for that country, when it is recollected that the native soldier's inferior stamina is moreover loaded with a pouch calculated to carry 60 rounds of balled cartridges (40 would be abundant for every occasion), a heavy laden knapsack containing all his necessities, often including cooking utensil, . . .

"With regard to the pay and allowances of the Native soldiers, it is at this day the very same in amount as when it was first fixed, which was in so early a period of our establishment in that country, that in a code of Pay Regulations, published by the Military Auditor-General in 1810, it is stated, that the same rates as therein stated of pay and *batta* have been always passed to the native troops but that no record of the authority establishing them in the first instance is anywhere to be found."

In the footnote to the above, he adds :

"Nor do the Native troops ever receive any bounty on enlistment, whilst on every relief or change of situation they have to provide quarters at their own expense."

Then Sir H. Worsley proceeds :

"It may be safely assumed that since the early period of time in question, all necessities of food and raiment have risen from 50 to 100 per cent. 2ndly, that the country then occupied was bounded by the Currumnassah River, progressively extended to the Vizier's dominions, and now bounded by the river Sutledge and the deserts of Bikaner, and that in like manner have the labours and duties and the wear and tear consequent on distant marches, in peace as well as in war, proportionately increased, with expense and inconvenience enhanced in many cases where water carriage cannot be employed for the conveyance of the baggage, families, etc., of the troops.

"It will be no disparagement of any other troops to say, that hitherto the native army of India has never been surpassed for fidelity to the Government, and attachment to their officers, nor 'yielded to those of any other nation in point of discipline and effective valour.' But it is, I fear, too true, that there is, in some respect, a falling off from its former excellence, as regards the inclination to enter the service on the part of the same respectable classes that formerly sought it with avidity, nor does the same spirit of contentment and satisfaction seem to prevail. They seem to have lost much of their characteristic purity and simplicity of manners by which their moral and military virtues were formerly enhanced. They are, nevertheless, the most orderly, respectful and obedient soldiers in the world, and I fervently trust and hope they will not fail to continue so to the end of time provided their habits and prejudices are duly attended to, by which their attachment and fidelity has hitherto been secured, and a lesson taught to after ages, 'that their lives may be commanded through the medium of their affections'."

The European troops in India always had a good time of it. They were pampered and they almost did next to nothing. Thus Lieutenant-Colonel Baker wrote in the letter dated 29th February, 1832, to Mr. Villiers:

"That in Bengal, except in time of war or on actual service, or for the political purpose of overawing the native army, they (the European troops) are entirely useless to the Government for the ordinary duties of the country. They perform no duties that can be possibly avoided, or which involve any exposure to the climate. The Governor-General's and the Commander-in-Chief's guards are solely furnished by the native regiments. Even in Fort William but half the main guard is supplied by his Majesty's regiments in garrison there, to furnish the covered sentries, *i. e.*, in the shade of some building, veranda or gateway. Even the orderly to carry the adjutants' orderly-book is a native soldier from Barrackpore. On a march in Bengal, a regiment of His Majesty's dragoons or infantry must have a detachment of native infantry (generally a company under an English officer) to perform most of their duties for them in camp."

The native troops had many grievances and were labouring under many disadvantages. But no one ever bestowed a thought to redress the former or remove the latter. It would be no exaggeration to say that year after year their grievances and disabilities increased rather than in any way diminished. During the Burmese War, as more troops were needed for the front, one of the native infantry regiments stationed at Barrackpur, namely, the 47th, was ordered for the service. Of course, the sepoy had to obey the orders. But it was the bounden duty of the authorities to see whether it was possible for the sepoy to obey those orders. They should have attended to the comforts of the sepoy, towards whom cold and unsympathetic was their attitude. But they did nothing of the sort. The native soldiers had to pay for their transport whenever they were ordered to move from one place to another.\*

But when the native infantry regiment was ordered from Barrackpur to proceed to the front, it was impossible for it to secure any transport of any sort. The East India Company's historiographer, Thornton, is obliged to write :

"In the instance under notice, however, no bullocks could be provided, none could be hired, and they could only be purchased at an extravagant price. An application for assistance from the commissariat department was made, but was answered by an intimation that the men must provide the required accommodation for themselves."

Of course, this was impossible; the Commanding Officer of the regiment, Colonel

\* Thornton's *History of British India*, vol v, page 105. He writes :

"The European does not carry even his knapsack. The sepoy is not excused from this burden but in addition to ordinary necessities, he must find means of conveyance for a set of utensils for cooking, with which each man is provided and these added to his clothing, appointments and ammunition, would constitute a load which the comparatively slender frames of the native troops would be altogether unable to bear through a lengthened march, more especially if it were to be performed, as most frequently happen, under unfavourable circumstances. Carriage-cattle are, for this reason, of prime necessity for the movement of an army, but it is to be observed that *the expense of these animals, and their drivers, so far as employed for the use of the sepoy, had been accustomed to be defrayed by the sepoy themselves.*"

That the sepoy's knapsack was a curse even in the year of grace 1858, will be evident from what Sir Mark Cubbon, K. C. B., Commissioner for the Government of the territories of his Highness the Rajah of Mysore, wrote in his letter dated Bangalore, July 24, 1858, to Colonel Durand. He wrote :

"The present musket is good enough, though it would be better if it were somewhat lighter. But the sepoy does not complain of the weight of his present musket, his great grievance is his present knapsack, relieve him of that and he will consider it as great a boon conferred upon him, as if the Government had given him a considerable increase of pay. When the knapsack was first introduced into the Madras army, it was a small and convenient pack, the present knapsack or its like was introduced in 1817, and it is the curse of the native army. More men have been invalided and pensioned from the chest-founding action of the knapsack than ever would have been from the ordinary risks of the service. The knapsack is looked upon as the bore of the service, and were it to be removed altogether, it is certain that the sepoy of the whole army would greet the measure as a great boon, and the service would instantly become much more popular than it has recently been and plenty of recruits would be found, why should not this be done at once?"—P. 105 of *Papers connected with the Re-organization of the Army in India* presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty, 1859.

Cartwright spent money from his private funds for the purchase of transport animals. At that moment, the Government also advanced money for the same purpose. But then it was too late. The disease had passed the stage of the application of any correct remedy.

It was given out that the regiment would be transported by sea from Calcutta to Rangoon. The men in the regiment—all high-caste Hindus—had not enlisted for service in countries to which they could not march. It does not appear that any steps were taken to remove this impression (assuming it to have been a false one) from the minds of the sepoys. In the petition which they presented to the military authorities, to which reference will be made presently they stated this to be the ground of their complaint and grievance.

The regiment was ordered to parade on the 30th October, 1824, in marching order. The men appeared without their knapsacks. The explanation which they offered was that their knapsacks were old and worn-out ones, not fit to be used. They stated their grievances which were not unreasonable. They said they would not proceed to Rangoon or anywhere by sea as that was not in the bond which they had executed: and if they were to be sent to the front, they should be granted extra allowances or double *Batta*, as they called it, which claim they based on the grounds first that increased pay had been given to bullock-drivers and persons engaged in similar services; secondly, that according to report everything was very dear in the country to which they were ordered to proceed.

No measures were adopted to conciliate them or to remove their causes of discontent. But the parade was dismissed and the commanding officer sought the advice of the general officer commanding at Barrackpur who proceeded to Calcutta to consult the then Commander-in-Chief General Paget.

As the result of the deliberations of these higher authorities two British infantry regiments *vi* His Majesty's 1st Royals and 47th a corps of artillery and a troop of the Governor-General's body-guard were brought from Calcutta to Barrackpur and the disaffected regiment was ordered to parade on the 1st November when the men found themselves surrounded by the British troops.

They had forwarded to the Commander-in-Chief a memorial stating their grievances. This document was written in the vernacular and was translated, it seems not quite correctly by the Persian interpreter. In it they wrote:

"The case is this:—The soubahdar major and havildar major told the sepoys, &c they were going to Rangoon, and would be embarked on board ship, and he told all the sepoys that when the Company went to war they ought not to shrink. After this the soubahdar major and havildar major sent for four men from each company and said 'those who wear the *takkee kfoo* ought not to cast it off. This also they ought not to do. The sepoys replied that they never could put their feet on board ship, and that no person would forfeit his caste. For this reason all the sepoys swore by the Ganges water and *foolsee* that they never would put their feet in a ship and every gentleman knows that when a Hindoo takes Ganges water and *foolsee* in his hand he will sacrifice his life. In this way the regiment &c. pledged themselves. This which is written is our representation. And further the soubahdar and havildar before mentioned went to the commanding officer, Colonel Cartwright, and stated that the regiment was ready to march, that all the sepoys had

agreed (to march), whereas the sepoys knew nothing of this circumstance. Now, you are master of our lives, what you order we will do, but we will not go on board ship, nor will we march for that purpose. Formerly our name was good, but it has now become bad, our wish is, therefore, that our names be effaced, and that every man may return to his home."

It does not seem that this representation of the sepoys, couched in respectful language, was taken into serious consideration by the Commander-in-Chief or his staff. Had kindness and a conciliatory spirit been shown to them and they had also been assured that they would not be required to embark on board ship for Rangoon, in all probability they would have behaved as all good soldiers ought to do. But to treat the sepoys kindly was not the policy of the European military officers. By the order of the Commander-in-Chief, the sepoys were ruthlessly massacred on the morning of the 1st November. Kaye writes :

"A hard, strict disciplinarian, with no knowledge of the native army, and a bitter prejudice against it, Sir Edward Paget was a man of the very metal to tread down insurrection with an iron heel, regardless both of causes and of consequences. . . . Some attempt was made at explanation—some attempt at conciliation. But it was feeble and ineffectual : perhaps not understood. They were told, then, that they must consent to march, or to ground their arms. Still not seeing the danger, for they were not told that the artillery guns were loaded with grape, and the gunners ready to fire,\* they refused to obey the word, and so the signal for slaughter was given. The guns opened upon them. The mutineers were soon in panic flight. Throwing away their arms and accoutrements, they made for the river. Some were shot down, some were drowned. There was no attempt at battle. None had been contemplated. The muskets with which the ground was strewn were found to be unloaded."†

That this bloodshed, indulged in by the Commander-in-Chief, could have been prevented, will be evident from what Kaye says on this subject :

"A few sentences of well-chosen, well-delivered Hindoostanee, on that fatal November morning might have brought the sepoys back to reason and to loyalty. But they had the benefit of neither wise counsel from within nor kindly exhortation from without. Deprived, by the reconstruction of the Army, of the officers whom they had long known and trusted, they were more than ever in need of external counsel to bring them back to a right state of feeling. They wanted a General of Division, such as Malcolm or Ochterlony, to re-awaken their soldierly instincts—their pride in their colours, their loyalty to their salt. But instead of such judicious treatment as would have shown them their own folly, as in a glass, the martinets of the Horse Guards, stern in their unsympathising ignorance, their ruthless prejudices, had, in our own territories, at the very seat of Government, in the presence of no pressing danger, no other lessons to teach, no other remedies to apply, than those which were to be administered at the bayonet's point and the cannon's mouth."‡

The demoralising effects of this massacre have been described by the same authority as follows.

"But this display of vigour, though it checked mutiny for the time, tended only to sow broadcast the seeds of future insubordinations. It created a bad moral effect throughout the whole of the Bengal army. From bazaar to bazaar the news of the massacre ran with a speed almost telegraphic. The regiments, which had already marched to the frontier, were discussing the evil tidings with

\* "It is doubtful, indeed, whether they knew that the guns were in the rear of the European regiments."—Kaye.

† Kaye's *History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. I (1870), pp. 268-69.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 270-271.



mingled dismay and disgust before the intelligence, sent by special express, had reached the ears of the British chiefs. 'They are your own men, whom you have been destroying,' said an old native officer, and he could not trust himself to say more."<sup>\*</sup>

The brutal Commander-in-Chief was not content with mowing down the sepoy by artillery fire. He court-martialed the survivors, when many were hanged. The regiment was afterwards struck out of the Army List.

Thus ended the disgraceful affair of the Barrackpore massacre. Had justice been done, it was the Commander-in-Chief and members of his staff who deserved to be hanged or blown from the mouths of cannon rather than the sepoy. But in this nether world of ours, justice is not always to be had, but might is right.

This wanton massacre of the sepoy forms a dark episode in the history of the Burmese War. There have been many English writers who have not scrupled to add insult to injury by blackening the character of the sepoy. According to them, the refusal of the sepoy to proceed to the front proceeded from fear, cowardice and other similar causes. Thus Metcalfe, who ought to have known better, wrote:

"Now what does this mutiny proceed from? Either from fear of our enemy, or from disaffection to our Government ..... They (the sepoy) detest the eastern part of Bengal more than the western, and the country beyond our frontier they believe to be inhabited by devils and cannibals, the Burmans they abhor and dread as enchanter against whom the works of mere men cannot prevail. What does all this amount to in brief but this—that we cannot rely on our Native Army? Whether it be fear of the enemy or disaffection towards us, they fail us in the hour of need. What are we to think of this, and what are our prospects under such circumstance. " It is an awful thing to mow down our own troops with our own artillery, especially those troops on whose fidelity the existence of our empire depends."<sup>†</sup>

But Herbert Spencer, when referring to the Barrackpur massacre, wrote:

"Down to our day continues the cunning despotism which uses native soldiers to maintain and extend native subjection—a despotism under which, not many years since, a regiment of sepoy was deliberately massacred, for refusing to march without proper clothing."

\* *ibid.*, p. 269.

† *Kaye's Selections from the papers of Lord Metcalfe*, p. 153.

## CHAPTER LXIV

### THE TERMINATION OF THE BURMESE WAR

The war was very unpopular both in England and in India. The Government was straining every nerve to come out of the war with as much glory and honour as possible. Money was spent on it like water. But failure on all directions stared Government in the face. Success was not to be obtained by fighting alone. So recourse was had to Machiavellian principles. H. H. Wilson writes :

Reports having reached Sir A. Campbell, that much dissatisfaction had been excited in the district of Dalla by the orders of the court for a general conscription a force of four hundred men was embarked under Lieutenant Colonel Kelly and despatched on the 8th of August to take advantage of any opportunity that might offer of giving support to the discontented

Comments on the above are not needed. It was by acting on Machiavellian principles that the English succeeded in dismembering some of the districts of the Burman Empire. The same author who has been quoted above, writes :

In the impossibility that existed of engaging in any active operations in the direction of Ava it was judged advisable to employ part of the force in reducing some of the maritime provinces of the Burman kingdom. The district of Tenasserim, comprising the divisions of Tavoy and Mergui was that selected for attack, . . . (A force) sailed from Rangoon on the 20th August and reached the mouth of the river leading to Tavoy on the 1st September . . . A conspiracy among the garrison facilitated the capture of the place, the second in command making the Maiwoon and his family prisoners delivered them to the British officer, and the town was occupied without opposition.

Of course, even a child can understand that the conspiracy was incited by the British. The above-quoted author does not state the price that was paid to the second-in-command for this foul act of treachery.

There is no need of narrating in detail the skirmishes and battles fought between the English and the Burmese in which more often than not the latter were beaten not because they lacked in courage or even military strategy but because they were no match for their antagonists in the exercise of the Machiavellian art, which the English had carried to perfection. To add to the misfortunes of the Burmese, their able general Maha Bandula who had come from the Arrakan frontier on hearing of the capture of Rangoon was killed on the 1st of April 1825 by the bursting of a shell while fighting the English from his fortified place of Doonabew. That he was a general of no mean order even his enemies are forced to admit. Major Snodgrass says of him

The management of a Burmese army for so long a period, contending against every disadvantage to which a general could be subjected, evinced no small degree of talent, while the position and defences at Donoobew, as a field work, would have done credit to the most scientific Engineer . . . During the days of his prosperity Bandoola seldom exposed his person in the battles of Rangoon and Kokeen he was never under fire but he did not hesitate, when circumstances required it to allow himself to be hemmed in at Donoobew where he boldly declared he would conquer or die

and till he actually fell, set his men the first example of the courage he required in all."<sup>o</sup>

The English were desirous of concluding peace, because the war was unpopular, and they had to pay a very heavy penalty in the loss that occurred to their force by the sickness and death of the men composing it. The Burmese were equally desirous of peace, because the war was not of their own seeking and they had already suffered very heavily. The English by bribery and corruption and holding out other temptations had succeeded in raising traitors in the Burmese camp. They conspired with the Siamese and instigated them to create disturbances in the provinces contiguous to their borders. H. H. Wilson writes :

"Although they (the Siamese) had taken no part in the war, they had continued their military demonstrations. In December (1824), a letter was received by Captain Fenwick, at Martaban, from the Ronna Ron, announcing that he was on his march towards the Pegu frontier, with a Siamese army, and had moved to Kumboori on his way. It was, accordingly, arranged by the Commissioners, that Captain Williamson should be attached to the Siamese and a letter was addressed to the ministers of Siam, in encouragement of the disposition thus manifested."<sup>oo</sup>

Reduced to such straits, it is no wonder that the Burmese were anxious to conclude peace. But they did not make the first move for it. It was the English who did it. To quote the above-mentioned author:

"Although prepared for the renewal of hostilities, the English General, being sensible that it was not the wish of the Government of India to urge them to extremities, availed himself of an opportunity that occurred at this period (after the death of Bundoola), to afford an opening to a negotiation for peace. Amongst the individuals of all ranks, who had now flocked to Prome, was a confidential servant of the prince of Tharawadi, who made no secret of his relation to the prince, nor of the distress which the latter suffered from the occupation of his government by the English. A private letter was, accordingly, addressed to the prince, through this channel, by Sir A. Campbell, stating the disposition of the British Government to terminate the war, whenever the Court of Ava should be inclined to offer reparation for the injuries which had provoked it, and to indemnify the British Government for the expense. This attempt, however, was unavailing, and no answer was received." †

The English had instigated insurrections and created disorder in the Burmese Empire and so they thought they would succeed in forcing the Burmese monarch to accept the terms of peace dictated by them. H. H. Wilson writes :

"Various reports were current at that time, which rendered it probable that the overture would be acceptable. Insurrections had taken place, it was asserted, in different parts of the Burman dominions, and a rumour of the deposition of the King seems to have found extensive currency. The reports turned out to be incorrect: but there was no doubt that the war was highly unpopular, and that the Lotoo, or Great Council of the State, was much divided." §

The principal conditions of peace proposed by the British were so humiliating that they were rejected by the Burmese. So once more hostilities were resumed, but the Burmese, with their slender resources, were unable to carry on the war successfully

<sup>o</sup> *Narrative of the Burmese War*, pp. 176—177.

<sup>oo</sup> *Loc. Cit.*, p. 280.

† *Ibid.*, p. 280.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

with the English. They were desirous of peace and so were the English. The English had in their train one Burman priest, designated as the Raj-Guru. He was allowed to proceed to Ava, furnished with a private note from the British General, expressive of the readiness of the English to conclude peace with the Burmese King. The priest succeeded in inducing the Burmese Court to make overtures for peace. Hostilities were suspended, and deputies from both parties met in conference on the afternoon of the 30th December 1825. At this meeting, terms were stated and their discussion postponed till the next day. A third meeting took place on the 2nd January 1826. A treaty was drawn up the English copy of which was signed on the 2nd and the Burmese copy on the 3rd January, and an armistice was agreed upon till the 18th of January. But the treaty was not approved of by the Burmese King and so hostilities were again resumed. (The British force was on full march towards the capital of Ava, which also scored some victories on the route. The King and his ministers felt that they were in the power of the British, meanwhile they were also informed of the fall of Bhurtpur. It was these considerations which led the Burmese Court now to sue for peace. The treaty of peace was concluded at Vandabu, a place within four days' march of Ava.

Thus ended a war which benefited the Governor-General more than anybody else. H. H. Wilson writes that the war

"inflicted very severe penalties on both the belligerent parties: on the British, by a heavy, pecuniary expenditure and awful loss of life: and on the Burman Empire, by an equal sacrifice of men and money, and by the perpetual separation of some of its most highly valued dependencies. The expense of the military operations had greatly exceeded all anticipation, and had been, in some respects, unnecessarily wasteful....A large portion of the expenditure, however, arose out of misinformation with regard to the resources of the Burman kingdom, which, instead of being adequate to the support of the troops, proved to be wholly deficient.\*..."

Major Archer's remarks are so pertinent that they may be quoted here *in extenso* as a fitting conclusion to this chapter on the Burmese War.

"At this moment the Company is deeply in debt, consequent upon the enormous, if not profuse, expenditure in as foolish and useless a war as was ever waged between a powerful and civilised state and a barbarous and really contemptible people. This grew out of sending a person to rule the destinies of India in every point deficient in the necessary qualifications, one who possessed but little experience in the arts of government, particularly in one so foreign to that of his native country.....

"The Ava War, entered upon in all the hurry of fear, was of course not guided by judgment, either in the plan of operations or the most fitting time for commencing them...The history of this war is divested of all honourable characteristics...Death reaped a plenteous harvest at Rangoon and in Arracan, those to whom he did not deal the finishing stroke continue to bear the remains of a disease which baffles all attempts of skill to overcome,...

"Had the Burmese entered over our frontier, we should have met them on vantage ground, and have given them a hearty good drubbing..."†

\* *Ibid.*, p. 261.

† (*Tours in Upper India and in parts of the Himalaya Mountains*, Vol. II, pp. 296—304).

## CHAPTER LXV

### THE REDUCTION OF BHARATPUR

The reduction of Bharatpur by Lord Combermere during the administration of Lord Amherst did not lead to any extension of the territory of British India, but it enhanced the prestige of the British Indian Government. Lake had failed to reduce it. Metcalfe, in his paper on the bombardment of fortified places transmitted to Lord Moira in November, 1814, wrote :

"At Bharatpore, four assaults and the greatest exertions of the united armies of Bengal and Bombay were ineffectual against a straggling and extensive walled town, situated on a plain, with a dry ditch, which the activity of the enemy converted into a wet one before the breach, and defended by men whom we used to call a rabble.

"Our failure on that occasion may be attributed partly to the difficulties which opposed the attack, and partly to the firmness and activity of the defence, and partly to the presence of a large enemy's army under the walls which embarrassed our operations, and partly to the want of confidence on the part of our troops after the first check."

Then he went on to mention the causes of failure in detail

"The commencement of our systematic failures may be dated from the unfortunate siege of Bharatpore, where a great portion of our military fame was buried.

"The real cause of our repeated failure seems to be, that our opponents now are better able to defend themselves against us than our opponents were formerly ; consequently that we have not the same superiority on these occasions that we formerly possessed, nor have our troops the same confidence.

"The sight of a white face or a red coat is not sufficient now, on all occasions, as it once was, to make our adversaries flee in dismay and abandon defences in which they have well-grounded confidence.

"Either the gradual and imperceptible circulation of knowledge has given them a better mode of defence and greater resources ; or the charm which ensured us success is dissolved ; or from some other change of circumstances we are less invincible than we were : for certain it is, that there have been occasions on which the backwardness of our troops has been complained of and whatever may have been the immediate cause of their defeat, they have repeatedly turned their backs on the walls of foes who, in theory, would be considered contemptible, and who to this day are compared by some writers in England to a flock of sheep.

"This is a subject which cannot be taken too much into deep consideration. On our military superiority our power entirely depends. That superiority is lessened by every defeat.

"Often has the fate of India depended on a single army ; often again may the fate of a great part of India depend on a single army ; and if ever, by any combination of unfortunate accidents, such scenes should be exhibited in an army in the field, having the fate of our empire in great measure attached to it, as have occurred more than once in storming parties, and even in considerable detachments, our power might receive a blow from which its recovery might be questionable."

The importance of the above extracts from Metcalfe's paper will be understood

when we come to describe the part played by him in the Bharatpore affairs of 1825.

At the request of Lord Amherst, in the autumn of 1825, when Metcalfe was at the Presidency, on his way to Delhi, he drew up the paper on the general question of interference in the concerns of other states, especially Bharatpore and Ulwar. "The policy which he recommended," writes Kaye, "was adopted by the Supreme Government; and the capture of Bhurtpore and the submission of Ulwar were the results."

He commenced his paper by saying :

"It is presumed to be universally acknowledged as a general principle, that we ought not to interfere in the internal affairs of other states; and the same is enjoined by the repeated orders of the Court of Directors.

"But we are continually compelled to deviate from this rule, which is found untenable in practice, and the deviation is generally sanctioned, and sometimes directed by the same authority.

"With respect, therefore, to all states over which our supremacy extends, our duty requires that we should support the legitimate succession of the prince, while policy seems to dictate that we should, as much as possible, abstain from any further interference in their affairs.

"Supposing the principles above stated to be correct, our duty with regard to the succession at Bharatpore may be easily defined.

"We are bound, not by any positive engagements to the Bharatpore State, nor by any claim on her part, but by our duty as supreme guardians of general tranquility, law, and right, to maintain the legal succession of Raja Bulwant Singh to the Raj of Bharatpore; and we cannot acknowledge any other pretender.

"A display and vigorous exercise of our power, if rendered necessary, would be likely to bring back men's minds in that quarter to a proper tone; and the capture of Bharatpore, if effected in a glorious manner, would do us more honour throughout India, by the removal of the hitherto unfaded impressions caused by our former failure, than any other event that can be conceived."

Although the English had no business to interfere in the affairs of Bharatpur, yet from interested motives, they did so. Intrigues were set on foot to gain their end and wipe out the disgrace of two former defeats. So when in 1825, the reigning prince died, the succession was disputed by two cousins. The opportunity was seized by the British Indian Government to interfere in the internal affairs of the state and so they went to war with it. The then Commander-in-Chief, Lord Combermere, went in person to conduct the war. An army of 25,000 men with a large artillery invested the place on December 10, 1825 and it was not till the 18th January 1826, that the fortress was reduced †

\* Kaye's *Selections from the papers of Lord Metcalfe*, pp. 122-131

† A very good account of the storming of Bharatpur fort on the 18th January 1826 is given in *Memories of Colonel Skinner* (Vol. II, pp. 174 *et seq.*) In a footnote on p. 175, it is mentioned that it was on the suggestion of Colonel Skinner that the fort was mined.

"When the breach was first reported practicable by the engineer officer, Lord Combermere asked Skinner, who was by, his opinion on the subject, to which he only replied that he was unworthy

It is said that there was a legend current in that state that the gods had built the fortress and it would be captured only when an alligator came across the sea to besiege it. The name of the commander of the besieging army sounded something like "Kumbhir" which in some of the Indian vernaculars means an alligator. This worked upon the minds of the defenders of the fortress they became depressed lost heart and so the place fell.

But it is not improbable that some of the beleaguered army were bribed. This is to be inferred from the following :

From the moment that Lord Combermere arrived in the camp before Bharatpur, or rather which surrounded that place he was constantly in motion visiting every part of a most extensive encampment and superintending every operation from the commencement to its final close. Not content with this, on the day of the assault he actually headed one of the storming parties himself and had an officer killed on each side of him on the breach. Such conduct in a commander on ordinary occasions would be deservedly censured as unnecessary and foolhardy exposure. Here the character of our army and safety of our East Indian possessions perhaps even our very existence depended on the success of the moment : and the presence of the Commander-in-Chief almost supplied the absence of two or three thousand Europeans. From the time of Lord Lake's failure against this place it had never ceased to be thrown in our teeth by the Natives in every part of the East, and many a man in conversing about our successes, has silenced me in a moment, by saying. "All this may be very true, but can you take Bharatpore?" Even after it was taken, no Native would believe it was captured by storm, and to the last hour of my residence in India they persisted in asserting that it was bought, not conquered.

After the capture of Bharatpur the atrocities barbarities and cruelties perpetrated by British officers and men on the hapless and helpless people of that town may be inferred from the following recorded by two officers in their works on travels in Northern India.

Major Archer writes under date of 29th January 1823 :

After dinner some acting gentry, or rather buffoons, made their appearance, and caused us to laugh by their most ludicrous representation of the capture of Bharatpore, and our plundering it with vivacity as even to cut the hair off the heads of the people. §

Captain Mundy in his pen and pencil sketches of India tells the amusing story of a native pantomime in which the *dramatis personae* were an English prize-agent and a Bharatpore peasant.

"The former wore an immense cock-hat and sword the latter was stark naked with the exception of a scanty waist-cloth. The prize-agent stops him and demands his jewels and money.

to touch his excellency's shoe, much more so to offer him advice. But his lordship, desirous of learning his opinion, repeated the question, and urged a reply. On which Skinner said that the breach was impracticable, and that if attempted, the men would sink up to their armpits in the rubbish and there would be a repetition of the former failures, Colonel— then a subaltern in the engineers said he differed, but would ascertain the fact, and gallantly rushed forward crossed the ditch, and found that it was as Skinner had stated. He returned untouched by the fire patted Skinner on the back and said Old boy you are right and I am wrong. Skinner then said they must just do as the Mahrattas used to do on similar occasions and trust to mining. They did mine and the event proved the soundness of his opinion.

\* Welsh's *Military Reminiscences*, Vol. II. pp. 240-241.

(*Tours in Upper India*, p. 101).

The half-starved wretch protests his poverty, and appeals to his own miserable appearance as the proof. The Englishman, upon this, makes him a furious speech, well garnished with G-d-d-mns, seizes on the trembling Bharatporean, and determined not to leave him without having extracted something from him, takes out a pair of scissors, cuts off his long shaggy hair close to his skull crams it into his pockets, and exit swearing."

The above needs no comments.

To meet the expenses of the Burmese war and the Bharatpur campaign, Lord Amherst made the Indian princes, whether reigning or pensioners, advance him money to prosecute his ambitious military designs.

So writes John Malcolm Ludlow in his *British India*.\*

"The time for openly plundering native princes was gone with Warren Hastings. One observes, however, at this time, the extreme prevalence of the practice of obtaining loans from them. At the end of 1825, the king of Oude lends £1,000,000 sterling, £500,000 for two years the next year. The Baiza Bacc, after Sindhia's decease, lent £800,000. In the general loans which were contracted, we find smaller chiefs contributing their quota. The Raja of Nagpur £50,000, the Raja of Benares £20,000, even the unfortunate Bajee Rao, the ex-Peshwa, refunding a very considerable sum for the purpose out of the savings from his pension."

\* Vol. II, p. 65



## CHAPTER LXVI

### AMHERST'S VISIT TO DELHI

The Burmese war had made Amherst very unpopular with the authorities in England. To retrieve his popularity, he declared war against Bharatpur. But not content with the successful termination of that war, he made another bid for popularity by unnecessarily humiliating the position of the Mughal Emperor of Delhi. With this object in view, he proceeded to Delhi, arriving at that Imperial Capital on the 15th of February, 1827. He had an interview with His Majesty on the 17th. The latter was seated on

"the *Takht-i-Taoos*, or Peacock Throne, and the Governor-General took his seat in a State Chair in front of it on the right, and sat at right angles to His Majesty, the Resident and other officers present as well as the chief personages of the Court, all standing." \*

Amherst's conduct was considered so derogatory to His Majesty that he despatched Ram Mohan Roy to England. It is true that His Majesty consented to an interview to the Governor-General, for as he explained to the Resident that

"he had been influenced by an apprehension of consequences, similar to those which had resulted from the objection which His Majesty had urged to a meeting with the Marquis of Hastings on the footing then proposed, attributing, as he expressly stated, to this cause the subsequent assumption by the Nawab Vizier of the title of King, that, in the hope of obviating these consequences, he had reluctantly acquiesced in the ceremonial established by Lord Amherst, but that, instead of reaping from that concession the benefit which he expected, advantage was afterwards taken of it to introduce an alteration of the *ulkab*,..." †

A year afterwards the then Commander-in-Chief, Lord Combermere, visited the Emperor, on the 3rd February, 1828. Major Archer, who was his A. D. C., has recorded in his *Tours in Upper India* (p. 110) a description of that visit. The Commander-in-Chief and his staff paid homage to the Emperor and presented the usual *nuzzar*, regarding which Major Archer wrote that

"It is known that by such means he is necessitated to eke out the scanty pittance allowed to him and his numerous family, servants, and dependants residing in the fort. How are the mighty fallen!"

In a *shooqua* from His Majesty to the address of the Resident, received on the 26th November, 1831, His Majesty said:

"I had invariably looked for relief from the Government in every case through the medium of the Resident in attendance at my Court and that I had always continued to make him the channel of communicating my grievances to the Government, but that no one had ever exerted himself, in any instance, in my cause. Providence at length favoured me with a visit from Lord Amherst, which I hailed with feelings of the fullest confidence and delight at the prospect which it afforded of securing to me the fulfilment of the pledges that had been given me and the realization of all

\* P. 388 of Punjab Government Records, Delhi Residency and Agency, 1807-1857, (Vol. I.)

† *Ibid.*, p. 359.

my desires. I accordingly did everything in my power to please His Lordship, and showed him every kindness that I could possibly manifest, explaining at the same time the engagements of the British Government towards me and making a full disclosure of my wishes to him. His Lordship, however, evinced as little disposition as others to redeem those engagements or execute the provisions contained in the regulations of Government, and not confining himself to this, he had recourse to the novel procedure of setting aside the ceremonials and forms of address (*adab wu alfab*) observed by his predecessors, thus lowering me even in respect of the style of correspondence adopted towards me,—a thing that I could have least expected.”

The degradation of the Delhi Emperor did not produce any stir among the people of India. In a letter, dated the 20th of August, 1800, Sir Arthur Wellesley wrote to Major (afterwards Sir Thomas) Munro :

“As for the wishes of the people, particularly in this country, I put them out of the question. They are the only philosophers about their governors that ever I met with—if indifference constitutes that character.”

Peter Auber, in his *Rise and Progress of the British Power in India* (Vol. II, p. 606), writes that Lord Amherst

“terminated the implied vassalage previously rendered, or was supposed to exist towards the royal family, by the British Government. The event created, very naturally, a strong sensation at the time, as it was the first instance of our openly and decidedly asserting the independence of the British power : it was generally stated that the crown of Hindustan had been transferred to the British nation.

“The event is said to have been viewed with deep melancholy by the royal family and their dependants. They felt, whatever privations they might have suffered from the Mahrattas, their title to the sovereignty of India, had been invariably acknowledged. They were now, for the first time, divested of it.”

There was at that time in India no awakening of the national consciousness, no sentiment of patriotism, as that term is understood in the modern Christian countries of the West. This made the rise of the Christian power possible in India.

After the degradation of the Mughal Emperor, Amherst continued his journey northward to the Himalayas and spent the summer at Simla, where he received a friendly mission from Ranjit Singh and also the intelligence of the rupture between Russia and Persia. After quitting Simla in the end of June, he returned to Calcutta, where he stayed till the close of March, 1828, when placing the provisional government in the hands of Mr W. B. Bayley, he embarked for his native country.

## CHAPTER LXVII

### LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK'S ADMINISTRATION (1828—1835)

Lord William Bentinck had served as Governor of Madras but was recalled after the outbreak of the Mutiny at Vellore. The disgrace was rankling in his breast, and so he applied for the post of Governor-General of India after the retirement of Amherst. The course which he adopted was an unusual one. But it has been justified on the ground that

"He wished that the country which had been the scene of his undeserved humiliation, should also be the scene of his administrative triumph. These considerations must be taken into full account, if we would form an accurate estimate of the motives which induced Lord William Bentinck to appear as a candidate for the office."\*

Kaye, from whose article in the *Calcutta Review* the above extract has been made, mentions the special qualifications which Bentinck possessed for the Indian administration. He writes:

"When formerly Governor of Madras, he had devoted his active mind with great ardour to the study of Indian politics. He had made himself master of every subject connected with the internal economy and working of the Government. He had sketched out many plans for the improvement of the administration. In his eagerness to carry those views into effect and to prevent their being subverted by superior authority, he had, in one instance, adopted the extraordinary step of quitting his own presidency and proceeding to Calcutta."†

But no Indian having any sense of self-respect and not altogether wanting in patriotism, can praise Bentinck for all the trouble he took for making himself master of every subject connected with the working of the government, during the period of his governorship of Madras. True it is, that he perceived the benefits which Muhammadan rule had conferred on the natives of this country and which the Anglo-Indian Government of that day from the very nature of its constitution was precluded from doing. He wrote:

"In many respects the Mahomedans surpassed our rule; they settled in the countries which they conquered; they intermixed and intermarried with the natives: they admitted them to all privileges; the interests and sympathies of the conquerors and the conquered became identified. Our policy, on the contrary, has been the reverse of this,—cold, selfish and unfeeling."

It was easy for him to diagnose the disease and mention its symptoms. He knew the remedy also—the remedy which was calculated to cure the disease. But he did not propose to apply the remedy. It was during his governorship of Madras that one of the members of his council there, by the name of William Thackeray, penned a minute from which the following extracts are made:

"It is very proper that in England, a good share of the produce of the earth should be appropriated to support certain families in affluence, to produce senators, sages, and heroes for the service

\* *The Calcutta Review*, Vol. I, p. 34.

† *Ibid.*, p. 340.

and defence of the state. . . . . The leisure, independence, and high ideas, which the enjoyment of this rent affords, has enabled them to raise Britain to the pinnacle of glory. Long may they enjoy it;—but in India, that haughty spirit, independence, and deep thought, which the possession of great wealth sometimes gives ought to be suppressed. They are directly adverse to our power and interest. . . . . We do not want generals, statesmen, and legislators: we want industrious husbandmen.”

Referring to the above, Mr. William Digby truly observes:

“Mr. Thackeray was without excuse. Lord William Bentinck, who of set purpose selected Mr. Thackeray as his mouthpiece, they holding ideas in common, is even more without excuse.”\*

If we remember the above facts, we shall be able to understand Bentinck's policy when he held the office of Governor-General of India. Of course, he was not popular with the Anglo-Indian community of his day, because he disturbed the allowance of the civil and military officers. He was denounced by his Christian countrymen, because he touched their pockets. It is on this account that the memory of Bentinck is held in execration in the annals of Anglo-India. Even the paid historiographer of the East India Company, Thornton, had no good words to say of Lord William Bentinck. The reader is referred to his *History of British India* for the estimate he formed of his lordship.† So fair-minded a writer as the Honorable Mr. Frederick Shore wrote of Bentinck:

“But what has been the general result of Lord William's government? What has become of his determination to do his best for the interests of the people over whom he has been placed? Professions in abundance we have had; it has been a government of professions, which has begun and ended in words. It may have been his intention to have fulfilled them; but he forgot to add the qualifying proviso, that his good intentions were never to interfere with the main principle of the British Indian Government, profit to themselves and their masters at the expense of the people of India. \* \* The abominable system of purveyance and forced labour is still in full force. The commerce and manufactures of the country are daily deteriorated by the vexatious system of internal duties which is still preserved . . . . . the people are neither happier nor richer than they were before—indeed, their impoverishment has been progressive—for while the evils enumerated have continued in full force, the revenue screw has scarcely been relaxed half a thread of the many hundreds of which it is composed, . . . . . while the natives, the East Indians, and the English settlers, are found equally murmuring at the little which has been practically done to improve their condition.”

But because he was unpopular with his own countrymen, it does not necessarily follow that he wanted to injure them. No, he was their true friend and well-wisher.

\* *Prosperous British India*, p. 41.

† “It remains only to state that he (Lord Bentinck) quitted India in May, 1835, having held the office of Governor-General somewhat longer than the ordinary period, but having done less for the interest of India and for his own reputation than any who had occupied his place since the commencement of the nineteenth century, with the single exception of Sir George Barlow. His besetting weakness was vanity—the idol of his worship was popularity, and he sought to win its behests by an unrestrained sacrifice to what is called the ‘Spirit of the Age.’ Economy was in fashion, and therefore Lord William Bentinck was an economist. It was a period when showy and noisy pretension was permitted in many instances to carry off the rewards and honors which were due only to deep and solid attainments, and Lord William Bentinck challenged praise for a system designed to work in accordance with the popular feeling—professing to foster merit, but, in truth, calculated to foster only undue influence . . . . . For all these acts, charity itself can assign no motive but a weak and inordinate appetite for temporary admiration.” Vol. V, pp. 235-36.

§ *Notes on Indian Affairs*, Vol. II, pp. 223-224.

Every political and administrative measure that he carried out in India was for their benefit and calculated to do harm to the natives of the soil.

By Indian historians in general, Bentinck is considered to have been a peace-loving Governor-General. It is true that he did not involve India in costly wars like those of which his predecessors, Wellesley, Marquis of Hastings and Lord Amherst had been guilty. But then the finances of the country were in such a precarious condition when he was appointed to the high post of Governor-General that he could not indulge in the luxury of any costly war. He had to carry out retrenchments and so he was obliged to touch the pockets of his own co-religionists and compatriots, for which he was so unpopular with them.

However, there was one war during his regime by which a large province was made to lose its independence. Kurg was coveted by Anglo-Indians, because it appeared to them to be almost a paradise on earth. Says Mr. L. Bowring, who was for some years Chief Commissioner of Mysore and Kurg, \*

"Few parts of India are more picturesque than the little hill province of Coorg, and nowhere can be found a more gallant and loyal race than its inhabitants.....In former days, when to a native mind, the merit of a territory was its inaccessibility, few States enjoyed such an immunity from invasion as Coorg, the only approaches to it being through dense tangled woods, or up the face of steep mountains, clothed with forest trees, and cut up by stony water-courses."\*

It was to lift the *purdah* of and annex this beautiful land, that Bentinck made a war on its sovereign. The princes of Kurg were always friendly to the English. When the latter went to war with Tipu, the help which they received from the then reigning prince of Kurg, made them conclude a treaty with Kurg in 1790 with the following stipulations :

"1 While the sun and moon endure, the faith of the contracting parties shall be kept inviolate.

2. Tippoo and his allies are to be treated as common enemies. The Rajah will do all in his power to assist the English to injure Tippoo.

3. The Rajah will furnish, for fair payment, all supplies his country affords, and have no connection with other 'topiwallahs'

4. The Company guarantee the independence of Coorg, and the maintenance of the Rajah's interests in the case of a peace with Tippoo.

5. An asylum and every hospitality is offered to the Rajah and his family at Tellichery until the establishment of peace.

God, Sun, Moon and Earth be witness!" †

But as usual with the East India Company, their dealings with Kurg were not fair. It would seem that Bentinck was bent upon annexing Kurg because he knew its value to the colonisers of his race and creed when he was Governor of Madras. No trouble would have occurred, had the Kurg question been properly dealt with. The claims of the last Raja of Kurg were not well founded. Revd. Dr. Mœgling, in his history of Kurg, wrote in the *Calcutta Review* :

"The present ex-Rajah succeeded. He was acknowledged by the British Government without any difficulty, it appears. Devammaji's claims, and the promises of the Supreme Government given to her

\* "Eastern Experiences" (pp. 229, 238):

† *The Calcutta Review*, September 1856, p. 188.

father were overlooked. The resolution of the Marquis of Hastings, that the Coorg question should be investigated when Virarajendra's daughter would reach majority, seems to have been forgotten."<sup>\*</sup>

The Raja was represented (mis-represented) to be an incarnation of the Devil, and it was said that he delighted in murdering in cold blood his relatives and subjects. Affairs reached the climax when the Raja's sister Devammaji and her husband, fearing assassination at the hands of the Raja, sought protection of the Resident of Mysore. It does not seem unreasonable that she fled to the Company's territory, in order to draw the attention of the Company to her claims to the sovereignty of Kurg. It may be that she might have concocted all the stories of the cruelties of her brother in order to gain her own end. But the Resident and the Company not only took her and her husband under their protection, but they wanted to coerce the Raja. The Raja as an independent sovereign resented this interference. He was irritated beyond measure and it is alleged that he indulged in mad schemes. If he did so, his conduct was not unjustifiable. Perhaps, the authorities were seeking for a pretext to annihilate the sovereignty of Kurg and so provoked the Raja to take those measures which were necessary to maintain his dignity and safety.

This was just what the authorities were longing for. War was declared against the Raja. An expedition under British officers was sent to his territory. The Raja never meant war and so it was not difficult for the British force to occupy his country. Even the Revd. Dr. Moegling is forced to say that

"the Rajah, incited partly by the hope. . . . . that a reconciliation was yet possible, partly by the fear, that he might lose all, if matters went to extremities, sent orders prohibiting the Coorgs from encountering the troops of the Company. To this vacillation of the Rajah, the several divisions of the British expedition, then marching into Coorg, were more indebted for their success and even safety, than to the skill and talents of their commanders."<sup>†</sup>

The Raja submitted. He was dethroned and sent a captive to Benares. Had Bentinck been an honest man, here an opportunity presented itself to investigate the claims of the princess to the throne of Kurg. He did nothing of the sort, but on the contrary annexed the province on the ostensible plea that the people of Kurg unanimously desired to be placed under the protection of the East India Company! We know the significance of this diplomatic declaration. §

\* *Ibid.*, p. 196.

† *Ibid.*, p. 199.

§ Thornton, as an apologist for the annexation of Kurg, writes :

"The annexation of the conquered territory to the British dominions is not, on the first view, so clearly justifiable, but a very few words of explanation will shew that, in this instance also, the right course was taken. The Rajah was childless [this is not true, as one of the Raja's daughters was married to an English gentleman] and he had taken effectual measures to cut off all pretensions to the succession not derived from himself. The vacant throne was without a claimant, and the power which had occupied the country was called upon to provide in some manner for the administration of the government. A stranger might have been placed on the musnud, but there was no reason for the exercise of such self-denial on the part of the British Government, more especially as the people manifested a strong desire to become British subjects. The existence of such a desire removed every pretension for hesitation..." (Vol. V, pp. 214-215.)

The following Proclamation was issued to annihilate the national existence of Kurg :

"Whereas it is the unanimous wish of the inhabitants of Coorg to be taken under the protection of the British Government, His Excellency the Right Honourable the Governor-General has been pleased to resolve, that the territory heretofore governed by Virarajendra Vodeyar shall be transferred to the Honorable Company. The inhabitants are hereby assured that they shall not again be subjected to native rule, that their civil and religious usages will be respected, and that the greatest desire will invariably be shown by the British Government to augment their security, comfort and happiness."

Bowring writes :

"the province being one of the very few British possessions in India which has become such not by conquest, but by the free consent of the population. Perhaps owing to this fact, the government to which they announced their adhesion in 1834, has, not without good reason, shown them constant indulgence, and an exceptional deference towards their feelings and prejudices. For instance, the slaughter of cattle in Coorg is and likely to remain, forbidden, so long as the people deprecate it, nor would it be prudent or just to ignore their feelings on the subject, in the face of a distinct promise given to them by Colonel Fraser at the time of annexation."

It is admitted that Kurg is not a conquered province. Its inhabitants are not then bondsmen of England. But do they enjoy all the rights and privileges of free citizens ?

It was solemnly proclaimed that the civil usages of the inhabitants of Kurg would be respected. But this solemn proclamation was violated by the English when cash payment was demanded for land assessment. The Revd. Dr. Mœgling writes :

"Under the Rajas, the assessment had been paid in kind. The Collector of Mangalore now demanded cash payment ; this was considered a grievance, as the farmers were laid under tribute by the money changers."

There was an insurrection, which was put down with a high hand.

This was how the civil usages of the inhabitants of Kurg were respected !

Lord Bentinck should be held responsible for the ill-treatment that the Ex-Raja received at the hands of the E. I. Company and to obtain redress for which he went personally to England. The wrongs of the Raja need not be dilated on here.

Kurg was annexed because it was considered fit for colonisation by English settlers. The number of Englishmen who have settled in Kurg as coffee-planters is a very large one, as may be judged from the fact of its being the largest coffee producing province in India. According to the Agricultural Statistics for 1904-5, Kurg has an area of 48,142 acres of land under coffee cultivation. Bowring wrote :

"If the progress of enlightenment among the Coorgs has been slower than could be desired, their material progress has been remarkable. This is mainly owing to the extensive operations of the coffee-planters, who...began to colonise the country, the splendid forests in which promised a rich reward to the enterprising settler.

"From the time when Europeans began to settle in the district to plant coffee, the forests, with which the country was covered, began to acquire a new value. But at first any applicant received permission to commence operations in woods not claimed by private individuals, or regarded as

sacred forests. Very little trouble was taken about securing proper grants, permission to cultivate coffee on payment of the Government excise being deemed sufficient.”\*

The annexation of Kurg was immensely beneficial to every British officer who served in the expedition to that principality. By the distribution of the Kurg prize money, Sir P. Lindsay received one-sixteenth of the whole amount, and the other officers shared as follows:

Colonels	Rs. 25,000	each
Lieut.-Colonels	" 15,000	"
Majors	" 10,000	"
Captains	" 5,000	"
Subalterns	" 2,500	"

(Asiatic Journal, May 1836, p. 33).

After this need one wonder why the inhabitants of Kurg *unanimously* desired to place themselves under the protection of the English †?

Bentinck annexed Kachar under the doctrine of lapse—a doctrine which became so notorious during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Dalhousie. The ruler of Kachar, Govinda Chandra by name, was assassinated in 1830 and had no male heir and so the “benevolent” Bentinck did not scruple to annex it.

Shortly before his departure from India, Bentinck confiscated part of the possessions of the Raja of Jynteah on the ground of infraction of treaty!

It is true that excepting Kurg and Kachar no other province of India was annexed to the British dominion by Lord Bentinck.

He had his eye on Mysore also. He did not, however, annex it, because he could not do so without offering the Nizam of Hyderabad at least half of it. So he deprived the Maharaja of all power, placing the administration in the hands of British officers.

Bentinck had no right to deal with the Maharaja of Mysore in the manner in which he did so. The letter, dated September 7th, 1831, he wrote to that unfortunate prince, depriving him of all power to manage the affairs of his principality, did not allow him to answer the allegations contained in it or to afford him an opportunity to exculpate his conduct.

Major Evans Bell, in his work on *The Mysore Reversion*, has thoroughly exposed the falsehoods with which that letter abounds. He writes:

“The summary substitution of direct British management was a somewhat harsh remedy for any administrative abuses, when the Treaty gave us the power of dictating and enforcing the acceptance

\* Loc. Cit. p. 260.

† The deposed Raja of Kurg went (in 1852) to England to represent his case to the authorities there, and to obtain redress, if possible, for the wrongs inflicted on him. He took with him his only daughter, who was converted to Christianity and married to an English gentleman there. It is needless to say that no heed was paid to his representations. That laird of the Pen, Lord Dalhousie, insulted him. The Raja's case was put before the British public in a pamphlet published in 1857 by John Bumpus, 158, Oxford Street, London, and written by an officer formerly in the service of His Highness Veer Rajunder Waddëer, Rajah of Coorg.



of such ordinances as might have removed all cause of offence .....according to the strict letter of the Treaty (article IV), when it should be thought necessary to have recourse to this extreme measure, we had no right to attack the whole of Mysore, but only 'such part or parts' as should be required to render the funds of the State 'efficient and available either in time of peace or war'...

"The first attachment of the country by Lord William Bentinck was not justified either absolutely by the terms of the treaty or morally by any special urgency of outraged humanity, or of danger to the tranquillity of our own adjacent provinces. ... The fact is that the subsidy had been always paid with the utmost punctuality, and that not a single instalment was due at the date of the Governor-General's letter".

"Thus the grounds alleged for the original attachment of the country are not only unsustainable by terms of the Treaty, but are found to be even more opposed to truth than Lord William Bentinck was ever made aware."

Bentinck should have shown some consideration for the case of the Raja and asked him for an explanation before depriving him of power in his principality. He should not have acted on the advice of the then Governor of Madras, who was one Stephen Lushington, whose early career was not unknown to the Governor-General. For it was during his Governorship of Madras in 1805 that young Stephen Lushington, who had come out as a writer to Madras in 1791, had to leave it under a cloud for embezzlement of public revenue.†

His interference in the Jeypore affairs, upsetting the arrangements of his predecessors, led to the belief that he contemplated the annexation of that State of Rajputana. It is stated in the *Political History of Jeypore* (p. 29), published in 1868 as one of the Selections from the Records of the Government of India, Foreign Department No. LXV, that

"the appointment of Jootha Ram as minister. . . . was ascribed to a desire on the part of the British Government to annex the country, on account of the certain ensuing anarchy."

The tribute of the Raja of Jodhpur had fallen into arrear. An army had been assembled to overawe that prince, who was also threatened with dethronement. The district of Sambhar and a share of the Sambhar salt lake were taken possession of as a security. Lord William Bentinck also detained as security the Jeypore share of the Sambhar salt lake and district. Referring to this, Ludlow writes, that this "gave great offence to both prince and people. A jealousy of the English sprang up, and a few months after Lord William Bentinck's departure (4th June, 1835), an attack was made on the Resident Major Alves, and his assistant, Mr. Blake, was killed."§

The policy which his Lordship pursued in the Political or Foreign Department was such as paved the way to the annexation of the States of several independent or feudatory princes of Hindustan and bringing them under the direct administration of the East India Company. The manner in which he treated those princes was not calculated to make the relations between them and the English pleasant.

Take the case of Oudh. Bentinck meddled unnecessarily with the internal politics of

\* Pp. 21-24.

† See Major Evans Bell's *Memoirs of General John Briggs*, pp. 151 et seq.

§ *History of British India*, Vol. II, p. 95.

this Kingdom. His visit to Oudh in 1831 did not forebode good for that Kingdom. In his report of 11th July 1831, he wrote :

"I thought it right to declare to his Majesty beforehand, that the opinion I should offer to the home authorities would be, that unless a decided reform in the administration should take place, there would be no remedy left except in the direct assumption of the management of the Oudh territories by the British Government."

It is a well-known fact that this minute of Lord Bentinck strengthened the hands of Lord Dalhousie and the Directors of the East India Company, who were bent upon annexing Oudh.

The King of Oudh was alarmed by the hostile attitude which Bentinck assumed towards him. He intended the dispatch of an embassy to England to represent his case to the authorities. But how this was frustrated by Bentinck is not so well-known as it ought to be. A correspondent under the pseudonym of "Veritas" wrote to the *Indian Examiner and Universal Review* for April, 1847 :

Some ten or twelve years ago, it was generally believed, and publicly spoken of in the Calcutta Journals, that the East India Company would depose the then reigning sovereign of Oudh, take his rich country and treasury, in which he had enormous wealth, to themselves and pension the king, as they had many other native princes of India whose possessions they coveted. The king, greatly alarmed at the prospect of losing his kingdom, and becoming a pensioner of the East India Company resolved on sending an embassy to England, in order to create a sympathy in the British people, and avert, if possible, the wrongs likely to be done him.

"Having come to this resolution, his Majesty selected for the embassy Colonel du Bois an intelligent, talented gentleman, who then held a post of honor in the king's service. A native gentleman, from the Court of Oudh, was also to accompany Colonel du Bois as joint representative of his Majesty . . . while these matters were progressing, the supreme Government of India became alarmed at the probable results of the mission, . . . determined at once to frustrate the king's intentions, and to ruin the embassy immediately. A plot was accordingly laid for this purpose, in which a lady . . . took an active part, and deprived it of all its power. Charges of conspiracy against the East India Company's Government were brought forward against Colonel du Bois, as the embassy was on the eve of departure for England . . . Everything was carried on in secret against him and before the matter was brought to a conclusion the ship sailed, and the embassy proceeded in opposition to the Government. . . . The Government arbitrarily compelled the King of Oudh to dismiss his faithful servant, Colonel du Bois, on these absurd charges, brought forward for the express purpose of frustrating the King's intentions. . . . Colonel du Bois, though aware previous to quitting India, that he was charged with conspiracy against the East India Company, yet conscious of his own innocence, never supposed that he would be injured by it. What, then, must have been his horror and astonishment, on receiving his dismissal, which had been wrung from the King, his master, by the supreme Government of Bengal, and sent after him, in breathless haste, and without a moment's delay. . . . On Colonel du Bois being dismissed from the embassy, they had nothing to fear from the native gentleman, who was left in a helpless condition, friendless and in a strange country, where he knew not a word of the language, consequently not in a position to gain many in his favour, and after suffering great anxiety of mind he . . . became depressed in spirits, ill in health, and ultimately died at Poonah, on his way back to his sovereign, at Lucknow . . . . Colonel du Bois, finding he could obtain no redress from the East India Company, eventually sent his wife Madame du Bois to Calcutta, to seek an interview with Lord William Bentinck, and to implore him to redress his grievances, but the Governor-General was inexorable, for he had himself concocted the plot, for the benefit of his masters . . . . After this piece of injustice from the East India Company, Colonel du Bois retired to France, and would have held a post of high honour in

his native land, but Lord William Bentinck had returned from India, and was then in France, and in addition to the signal service he had done him with the King of Oudh, now prevented the King of the French from conferring this post of honour on him, by representing that Colonel du Bois had entered into a conspiracy against the East India Company's Government, though he knew at the same time that it was one of the foulest plots ever concocted to ruin the character of an honourable man, and to prevent the course of justice. . . ."

In this connection must also be mentioned the attitude of Bentinck to the embassy of the King of Delhi to England. The celebrated Hindu reformer, Ram Mohun Roy, was selected by the King to represent his grievances to the authorities in England. As Ram Mohun Roy was his ambassador, the title of Raja was conferred on him to exalt his dignity. Bentinck was much enraged at the proceedings of the King. To mark his displeasure with the conduct of His Majesty—whose vassal the East India Company, of which he was the representative, was, he did not see the King when he passed by Delhi.† This act of positive discourtesy, if not disloyalty, of Bentinck must have rankled in the breast of the King and of his relatives and loyal subjects and was probably one of the contributing causes of the Indian Mutiny of 1857.

Perhaps the fact is not so well known as it deserves to be that Bentinck was the author of a plot which had for its object the extinction of the Maratha Principality of Gwalior. Writes Mr. John Hope, a former Superintending Surgeon of Sindhia's Contingent, and Surgeon to the Court of Gwalior, in his brochure "The House of

\* *The Indian Examiner and Universal Review*, April, 1847, pp. 178-187.

† Raja Ram Mohun Roy was the bearer of a letter from His Majesty, the King of Delhi, to the King of England, in which it was stated :

"Even in the communication above stated insult, in point of form, was added to injustice. All the Governor-Generals who have preceded Lord Amherst in the Government of the British territories in India have thought it no degradation to themselves to address me or my august Father in the style that custom has accorded to Royalty. Lord Amherst, however, thought proper to reduce me, in the form of communication, to the footing of an equal, and thereby to rob me even of the cheap gratification of the usual ceremonials of address, so as to humble me, as far as possible, in the eyes of all ranks of people."

The King's deputation of Raja Ram Mohun Roy to England greatly enraged the Governor-General, who directed his Secretary, Mr. H. T. Prinsep, to write to Mr. W. B. Martin, Resident at Delhi, on 20th November, 1831 to

"call upon His Majesty for a distinct declaration whether Ram Mohun Roy is authorized to act as His Majesty's agent to present the letter from His Majesty from which the above passage is cited, and to advocate the appeal prosecuted therein against the forms of intercourse established."

The King did not see his way to disavow Raja Ram Mohun Roy and so the Resident was directed to inform His Majesty that

"Under the distinct avowal made by the King that Ram Mohun Roy is now his agent in England for prosecuting an appeal, among other points, against the footing on which the forms of intercourse and of correspondence between His Majesty and the Governor-General were placed by His Lordship's predecessor, the Earl Amherst, it seems to His Lordship to be impossible that any intercourse on that footing can be renewed, which His Majesty has in his letter to the King of England characterized as degrading and insulting."

For all particulars, see *Records of the Delhi Residency and Agency*, (Lahore, 1911,) Chapter XI, Failure of Negotiations for a meeting between the Governor-General (Lord William Bentinck) and His Majesty the King of Delhi in 1831.

Sindhia, a Sketch," published in 1863 by Messrs. Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts and Green :

"But if these dangers surrounded him [Maharaja Janko Scindea] in his capital, he was threatened with no less danger from the Council of Calcutta. Secret deliberations were there being held, with a view to discover what profit could be made out of the troubles of this weak but most faithful young prince, . . . A demi-official letter was written to the Resident by the Chief Secretary of the Foreign Department, desiring him to learn at a private interview, by way of a feeler, if the Maharajah, encircled as he was by serious troubles—*troubles mainly caused by our government*—would like to resign, assigning over the country to the British Government, and receiving a handsome pension, which would be paid out of his own revenues. There can be very little doubt that this demi-official document was of the genus *mystic*, and that no copy of it can now be found among the archives pertaining to India. Mr. Cavendish, than whom no Englishman ever attained a greater ascendancy over the minds of the natives with whom he had concern, declined to make such a suggestion and his answer threw a damp upon the hopes of the annexationists. . . . The Government officials were of course extremely angry. The press, almost entirely supported by the civil and military services which are immensely benefited by annexation, was very abusive. Presently another demi-official letter arrived, this time from the Deputy Secretary of the Foreign Department—a '*mystic*' one we may be quite sure—strongly expostulating with Mr. Cavendish upon his proceedings, and concluding with this significant remark, 'You have thus allowed a favourable chance to escape of connecting the Agra to the Bombay Presidency.' Of course the Resident's doom was fixed, though not just then declared. A few months afterwards, the Governor-General gratified his feelings of resentment by removing Mr. Cavendish to another native court. . . .

"Lest it should be thought by any one . . . that in this little sketch of his (Lord William Bentinck's) foreign policy, we have given even the slightest touch of colouring, we will relate, by way of illustration, an amusing anecdote, which is known to three or four persons now living, and which sufficiently confirms our statement that, in respect of the rights of native states, his lordship entirely overlooked the tenth commandment. It happened that Major Sutherland was selected to fill the office vacated by Mr. Cavendish. . . . He therefore waited on the Governor-General in Calcutta, to learn what the policy was to be at Gwalior, was it to be intervention or non-intervention? Lord Bentinck, whose disposition, like that of Lord Palmerston, loved a joke, quickly replied: 'Look here, Major,' and his lordship threw back his head, opened wide his mouth, and placed his thumb and finger together like a boy about to swallow a sugar-plum. Then turning to the astonished Major he said: 'If the Gwalior State *will* fall down your throat, you are not to shut your mouth, as Mr. Cavendish did, but swallow it, that is *my* policy. . . . To 'the traditional old Indians,' the objects of so much scorn in these days, this doctrine smacks of petty larceny. Imagine a magistrate of Bow Street to say to some smart-looking man, with a cloak hanging on his arm for a purpose, 'Don't prowl about the theatres at night, picking pockets, for that is larceny; but if you see a person drop his purse, keep it, a traditional old beak would call this petty larceny, but I tell you it is all right!' In a moral point of view, we think the two cases exactly parallel."

It seems that Bentinck was also scheming to absorb and annex other principalities of Central India. In 1835, there was a disputed succession to the throne of Jhansi. There were four claimants. Bentinck's decision is described by the Secretary to Government as follows :

"On this occasion the lawful heir by blood, descended of the body of Sheo Ram Bhow, was recognised as successor to the Raj, to the disallowance of a boy alleged to have been adopted, or nominated as successor by the late Rajah the day before his death, who if adopted would have

been unquestionably the heir to any property of his adoptive father to the exclusion of the uncle, and this was done without enquiry into the fact of adoption or nomination as though it was an immaterial circumstance.”\*

Bentinck had no right to interfere in the affairs of this principality by upsetting the adoption of the successor to the throne made by its late ruler. His object seems to have been to create confusion and distractions in that state and then to annex it on the ostensible plea that it could not manage its own affairs! In recognising Raghunath Rao, the deceased Raja's uncle, it was said:

“It being presumed that he is able to establish his authority, and that his succession will be acknowledged by disinterested parties at Jhansi.”†

This action of Bentinck in upsetting and not recognising the adoption of the successor to the throne of Jhansi made by its late Raja served as a precedent to Dalhousie in annexing that state in 1853.

Again in 1834, Lord Bentinck declined to interfere in favor of Malhar Rao Holkar's adopted son at Indore. He instructed the British Resident at Indore not to be present at the installation, or to confer the khillut of honor upon the young Raja. The Secretary to Government wrote to the Resident at Indore:

“There would appear to be three individuals whose pretensions to the sovereignty might be alleged with some colour of right,...His Lordship in Council is not prepared to pronounce upon the relative superiority of these claims. The decision may fairly be left to the voice of the country, and our duty will be to maintain whatever arrangement may appear to be unequivocally consonant to the general wish.”

Regarding this action of Bentinck, Sir George Clerk, the then Governor of Bombay, said that,

“the inconsistency, caprice, and mutability of our opinions regarding all great principles, is the bane of our supremacy in India.”

The Afghanistan imbroglio and disasters of 1839-1842, the subsequent unjustifiable wars in Sindh and Panjab and also the annexation of those two provinces, were in no small measure due to the part which Bentinck played in the scheme which was euphemistically called the navigation of the Indus.‡ The real author of this scheme

\* Jhansi Blue Book, p. 18.

† Jhansi Blue Book, p. 17.

‡ It was Moorcroft who first suggested the navigation of the Indus. Captain Cunningham, in his *History of the Sikhs* (first edition, p. 205), writes:

“The traveller Moorcroft had been impressed with the use which might be made of the Indus as a channel of British commerce, and the scheme of navigating that river and its tributaries was eagerly adopted by the Indian Government, and by the advocates of material utilitarianism. One object of sending King William's presents for Runjeet Singh by water, was to ascertain, as if undesignedly, the trading value of the classical stream, and the result of Lieutenant Burnes' observations convinced Lord William Bentinck of its superiority over the Ganges. There seemed also, in his Lordship's opinion, good reason to believe that the Great Western Valley had at one time been as populous as that of the East, and it was thought that the judicious exercise of the paramount influence of the British Government, might remove those political obstacles which had banished commerce from the rivers of Alexander. It was therefore resolved, in the current language of the day, to open the Indus to the navigation of the world.”

was Malcolm. Its genesis was the "Memoranda on the North-Western Frontier of British India, and on the importance of the River Indus, as connected with its defence drawn up by desire of Sir John Malcolm." This document was considered by the authorities of the East India Company, as well as by Bentinck. Some extracts from this State document, which was pregnant with such momentous consequences, are given below:

"Should ever an enemy appear on our N. W. Frontier, the possession of Sind will become a point of the utmost importance to British interests in India, as *commanding the navigation of the Indus*; a position in case of such an event occurring, of vital consequence to the defence of the country. A perfectly unrestricted communication on this river, can never be expected to be conceded us by the Court of Hyderabad.....The possession of Hyderabad may consequently become the object of the British Government—that effected, it is presumed, that very efficient measures might be taken to secure the free passage of the Indus. The execution would not appear to present any serious difficulties—the routes upon Hyderabad (as will be shewn) are very practicable, the fortifications of that Capital are insignificant, "The Seik" is the only foreign adjacent power—from the organization of his Government, the disposibility of his force, and his political discrimination, whose jealousy of our encroachment we need fear or propitiate, and the disjointed texture of the Scindian Force and Government, while it prevented union in those who opposed us, would afford us ample means of coercing any refractory chiefs, and of converting many into grateful allies, by substituting a liberal and beneficent rule, for the grinding tyranny of the Ameers."

Of course, the annexation of Sindh was plainly hinted at in the above document.

Bentinck played the part of Machiavelli in the Navigation of the Indus Affair. Metcalfe as a member of the Council of Bentinck raised his voice of protest against this measure.

In a minute dated October 1830, Metcalfe condemned the contemplated Survey of the Indus. He wrote:

"The scheme of surveying the Indus, under the pretence of sending a present to Raja Ranjit Singh seems to me highly objectionable.

"It is a trick, in my opinion, unworthy of our Government, which cannot fail when detected, as most probably it will be, to excite the jealousy and indignation of the powers on whom we play it.

"It is just such a trick as we are often falsely suspected and accused of by the native powers of India and this confirmation of their suspicions, generally unjust, will do us more injury by furnishing the ground of merited reproach, than any advantage to be gained by the measure can compensate. . . .

"It must be remembered that the survey of the Indus or any part of the Sindh country may give us the power to injure that State, may even assist us in conquering it, and in the course of events is as likely to be turned to use for that purpose as for any other. The rulers of Sind, therefore, have the same right to be jealous of our surveys of their river and their territories that any power of Europe has to protect its fortresses from the inspection of foreign engineers.

"It is stated in a late despatch from the Secret Committee that we must not permit the rulers of Sind to obstruct our measures, in other words, that we are to go to war with them to compel submission to our wishes. With deference I should remark that such an assumption does not seem to be warranted by the law of nations. . . . But the assumption is an exemplification of what I have often observed in our conduct towards the Native States, and what appears to me the greatest blot in the character of our Indian policy, although I am not aware that it has attracted any general notice in England. However much we may profess moderation and non-interference when we have no particular interests of our own concerned, the moment we discover any object of pursuit we become impatient and over-bearing, insist on what we require and cannot brook

denial or hesitation. We disregard the rights of others, and think only of our own convenience. Submission or war is the alternative which the other party has to choose."

"Thus at the present time, because we have taken alarm at the supposed designs of Russia, it would seem that we are to compel intermediate States to enter into our views or submit to our projects, although they cannot comprehend them, and instead of entertaining any apprehension of Russian designs, are more apprehensive of our own, our character for encroachment being worse than that of the Russians, because the States concerned have a more proximate sense of it from the result which they see in actual operation among the realms of India . . .

"Among other uncertainties of this great question, is that of what our own conduct ought to be when the expected crisis shall arise. Whether we should meet the enemy half-way and fight the battle in foreign countries—whether we should defend the passage of the Indus and make our stand there, or await the foe on our own frontier, and force on him all the labor, and loss, and risk of coming the whole distance before we attack him—must depend so much on the disposition of intermediate countries, and other circumstances of the time that it seems utterly vain to determine even our own course at this remote distance from the event . . .

"If, therefore, I were asked what is best to be done with a view to a Russian invasion, I should say that it is best to do nothing until time shall show us what we ought to do, because there is nothing that we can do in our present blind state that would be of any certain benefit on the approach of that event. . . .

"The only thing certain is, that we ought not to want only to offend intermediate States by acts calculated to arouse hostile feelings against us, but ought rather to cultivate a friendly disposition. . . .

"No rulers have ever shown their jealousy of us more decidedly than the Ameers of Sind, which feeling we are about to stimulate afresh by an act which will justify its past existence, and perpetuate its continuance.

"If the information wanted is indispensable, and cannot be obtained by fair and open means, it ought, I conceive, to be sought by the usual mode of sending unacknowledged emissaries, and not by a deceitful application for a passage under the fictitious presence of one purpose when the real object is another, which we know would not be sanctioned."

In a minute dated June 2, 1833, Metcalfe wrote :

"It does not appear to me that the establishment of a British agent at Caubul is requisite or desirable in any point of view.

"The professed object of the proposal is the improvement of commerce. I believe that commerce will take care of itself best without our direct interference in the form of a Commercial Agency, and, if we sought to remove existing obstacles, our efforts would be more needed elsewhere than at Caubul, where the trade with India already receives every possible encouragement.

"A commercial agent would unavoidably become, from the time of his creation, a political agent. To the extension of our political relations beyond the Indus there appears to me to be great objections. From such a course I should expect the probable occurrence of embarrassments and wars, expensive and unprofitable at the least, without any equivalent benefit, if not ruinous and destructive.

"The appointment of an agent at Caubul would of itself almost amount to an interference in the political affairs of Afghanistan. . . .

"As a commercial measure, I consider the one proposed to be unnecessary, as a political one, undesirable, and therefore, on the whole objectionable."†

*Kaye's Selections from the Writings of Lord Metcalfe*, pp. 211-217.

*Ibid.*, p. 218.

Kaye writes that

"The survey of the Indus and the Commercial Agency at Caubul were the *prolegomena*, so to speak, of the great epic of the Afghan War; and Metcalfe, in his correspondence both with Lord William Bentinck and Lord Auckland, argued and protested, with equal sagacity and earnestness, against measures which could hardly fail to entangle us in such a manner with the Trans-Indian States as eventually to evolve a great and calamitous war. He left India at a most unfortunate conjuncture. His services were never so much needed as at the time of his departure."\*

Metcalfe wrote :

"We could not long exist in a state of adequate preparation, as we should be utterly ruined by the expense."\*\*

The navigation of the Indus was ostensibly undertaken for the purpose of presenting a coach and horses to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Writes Prinsep :

"It was resolved to make the transmission of this present, a means of obtaining information in regard to the Indus, and the facilities, or the contrary, it might offer to navigation . . . The dray horses were accordingly sent out to Bombay, and the Supreme Government instructed Sir John Malcolm, the Governor of that presidency, to take measures to have them forwarded under charge of an intelligent and prudent officer, in boats up the Indus. Some demur was anticipated on the part of the rulers of Sindh to allowing them passage through the Delta and lower part of the river, but it was assumed that the governing Mirs, situated as they were relatively to Runjeet Singh on the one hand, and the British Government on the other, would not readily incur the risk of offending both powers, by refusing a passage altogether, if it were insisted upon."†

But Bentinck had his designs on the provinces of the Panjab and Sindh and so he paid no heed to the warning voice of Metcalfe.††

It was because he had his eye on Sindh, that he stood in the way of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's attempt in adding that province to his dominions. The treaty which was concluded with Ranjit Singh by the Government of India in 1809 expressly stipulated

\* *Ibid.*, p. 219.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 199.

† Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Runjeet Singh, Chapter X.

†† "The main and great aim of Government, is declared to be to open the Indus. Was the Indus ever closed or, farther closed than by its dangerous entrances and shallow depth of water? Another object was to open the countries on and beyond the Indus to commerce. Were they also ever closed? No such thing, they carried on an active, and increasing trade with India and afforded markets for immense quantities of British manufactured goods. The Governments of India and of England, as well as the public at large, were never amused and deceived by a greater fallacy than that of opening the Indus, as regarded commercial objects. The results of the policy concealed under this pretext have been the introduction of troops into the countries on and beyond the river, and of some half a dozen steamers on the stream itself, employed for warlike objects, not for those of trade. There is, besides, great absurdity in commercial treaties with the states of Central Asia, simply because there is no occasion for them. From ancient and prescribed usage, moderate and fixed duties are levied, trade is perfectly free, no goods are prohibited, and the more extensive the commerce carried on the greater advantage to the State. Where, then, the benefit of commercial treaties?" Manson's *Travels*, Vol. III, p. 432.

How Bentinck threatened the Amirs of Sind with the loss of their independence if they would not allow the navigation of the Indus by the British ships, has been thus related by M. Victor



that that sovereign was not to be hampered in his operations on any country beyond the Sutlej. So Lord Bentinck violated the Treaty when he forbade Ranjit Singh from acquiring Sindh.\*

The meeting at Rupar, in the latter end of 1831, of Bentinck with Ranjit Singh, was a covert attempt to spy out the military strength of Ranjit Singh.

Regarding this meeting, the celebrated French traveller, Victor Jacquemont, in one of his letters to his brother, wrote :

"It is not merely a magnificent embassy that the British Government now talk of sending to Runjeet Sing, the Governor-General desires to have a personal interview with the Maharaja. My friend Wade is returned to Lahore, to negotiate the etiquette at the meeting of the two stars of the East. They are counting steps and half steps and regulating beforehand the insignificant sentences which they are to exchange, &c. This is a very grave affair, and I do not think Wade will manage it well. The high contracting parties, as they say, have irreconcilable or incompatible pretensions, which form the subject of parley at the present time. What Lord William wants with Runjeet Singh, I am unable to guess,—to frighten him, perhaps and show him how easy it would be to annihilate him. The Colonel of one of the two regiments of English cavalry in the Calcutta Presidency writes to me from Simla that he has been appointed to command, not the escort, but the army, which is to accompany the Governor-General to his interview with Runjeet, if it take place : or the embassy to Lahore, in the reverse case."†

According to John Malcolm Ludlow (*British India*, Vol. II, p. 97) :

"At this interview was decided the question of the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan by Shah Sooja, a British pensioner at Loodiana, who, in January 1833, with a few hundred followers, set out for the invasion of Afghanistan. as it appeared by a treaty concluded two months later with the countenance of Ranjit Singh. His followers soon swelled to 30,000, he defeated the Ameers of Scinde, and moved on towards Candanar, but was in turn defeated by Dost Mahommed and had eventually to return a fugitive to Loodiana (1834). It is only in connection with subsequent events that the expedition has some importance."

Ranjit Singh threw all precautions away and did not hesitate to meet Bentinck at Rupar. On a previous occasion, when he had sent presents to Lord Amherst at Simla, the British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Combermere, who passed the warm season at Simla in 1828, desired to procure an invitation in person to Lahore, but then Ranjit Jacquemont in one of his letters, dated December 15th, 1831, to one M. Prosper Marimee of Paris :—

"The Ameers of Sind . . . . have been independent ever since the dissolution of the Afghan Empire. For these twenty years past, Runjeet Singh has been coveting their country and would long ago have seized it, had he not dreaded the displeasure of the British. The Ameers have just been informed that if they do not afford every facility and protection to the commercial and military navigation of the British on the Indus, they will be left to Runjeet Singh's tender mercy. They have hastened to reply that they are the submissive slaves of the old lady of London. and that it will be their pleasure as well as duty to establish dockyards on the banks of their river for the British steam-vessels." P. 221, Vol. II, of M. Jacquemont's Letters from India.

\* Captain Cunningham, in the seventh chapter of his History of the Sikhs, has dwelt at great length on this subject. One of the causes which provoked the Sikh War was the fact that the English to possess Sindh themselves had, during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Bentinck, made use of every stratagem, artifice and excuse to prevent Ranjeet Singh from acquiring, or extending his power over, Sindh.

† Jacquemont's *Letters from India*, London, 1834, Vol. II. p. 111.

Singh evaded compliance with this wish.\* But the Sikh sovereign, addicted to hard drink and debauchery, was losing his strong common sense, for which he was noted, and being easily seduced by the presents received from Bentinck, unhesitatingly acceded to the latter's wish and met him with all the pageantry of the East at Rupar†

The meeting at Rupar made Ranjit Singh disgusted with the English Government. Jacquemont wrote to his friend, M. Victor De Tracy of Paris, from Delhi, on January 11th, 1832:

"There is a coolness between Runjeet Sing and us—I mean the Government. The British wish to occupy the Lower Indus, and push their trade in that direction. They will unquestionably be obliged to establish military posts on the banks, in order to protect it. Hence the ill temper of Runjeet, who cannot resist and is forced to suffer what he cannot prevent."

"That which he allowed me last year out of compliment to the Governor-General, he would no doubt refuse me now."\*\*

It is said that Bentinck was not very favourably impressed with that Sikh sovereign and hence the contemptuous manner with which he treated him, and the conspiracy was laid during Bentinck's regime to subvert the Sikh Raj. Of this conspiracy, we read in the evidence of Captain Macan before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the affairs of the East India Company on 22nd, March, 1832 :

"1446. An idea has been broached that great additional security would result to our Eastern empire from the extension of our frontier to the Indus, is that a subject you have considered?—Yes, I have frequently considered it.

"1447. What is the result of your opinion?—I have heard many military men say that the Indus was our natural boundary in India, but it has been proved by late and former wars, that a river like the Indus is little or no obstruction to a well-organised invading army, and if we are to have a defensible boundary on that side, we should do more than stop at the Indus, we should push our posts into the hills, fastnesses and passes which are beyond that river, but I hold that the conquest of the Punjab (which is the country between the Indus and the Sutlej, upon which latter river our frontier posts are now stationed) would be highly impolitic and unjust. We already possess more territory than we seem capable of governing well. The chief of that state has been on amicable terms with us since the treaty made with him in 1808, the cause of that treaty was an attempt on his part to conquer the Seik Chiefs east of the Sutlej, and the purport of it (which has been faithfully observed by both parties since that period) was that he should not interfere east of that river, nor we to the west of it. The consequence has been, that he has gradually extended his conquests over the whole of Cashmere, Mooltan, and latterly Peshawar; his territory is extensive, populous and fertile, his army numerous and efficient, perhaps the best native army in India, with the exception of the British. Again, it would be impolitic to extend our frontier in that quarter, as it would bring us in direct collision with the Afghans, one of the bravest, most bigoted, and fanatical of all the Mahomedan tribes. Now, it is well known that the Seiks are neither Mahomedans nor Hindoos, but admit converts of both, though their religion has infinitely more of the Hindoo in it than the Mahomedan, they are therefore a wonderful barrier between us and those fanatical tribes, with whom if we were to come in collision, it would unquestionably have a dangerous influence on the religious prejudices of our Mahomedan subjects and troops."

\* Prinsep's *Runjeet Singh*, 9th Chapter.

† There is a very good account of the meeting at Rupar in *Memoirs of Colonel Skinner* (Vol. II pp. 206 *et seq.*)

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 255.

Of this conspiracy we read in Baron Hugel's *Travels* :\*

"Several articles had appeared of late in the newspapers of Hindustan and of Calcutta, which went to show that the English must of necessity soon march to the Indus, and make that river the Western boundary of British India, and I fancied that Runjeet Singh had thought a good deal of these articles."

Bentinck did nothing to allay the alarm into which Ranjit Singh was thrown by all these writings in the Calcutta papers, which were of course all inspired by the Governor-General or his subordinates in office. It was the policy of the Company of which Bentinck was the representative not to make any alliance with Ranjit Singh, for Baron Hugel wrote :

"A treaty offensive and defensive with the British Government, having a guarantee for the integrity of his possessions, was the only thing that could ensure the dominion of Ranjit Singh. But this would have prevented England from taking immediate advantage of any sudden occurrence which might fall out."†

Such was Bentinck's foreign policy. He annexed Kurg and Kachar, he interfered needlessly with the affairs of the kingdom of Oudh was made use of by those who favored the extinction of that kingdom. He unnecessarily humiliated and insulted the king of Delhi. He tried his best to exterminate the independent existence of the Maratha State of Gwalior. He approved of and countenanced, for he made no protest against, the navigation of the Indus, which laid the foundation of all the troubles in Afghanistan, Panjab and Sindh.

In the face of the above-mentioned facts, it is nothing less than travesty of truth to say that Bentinck was a peace-loving, honest and straight-forward man in his dealings with the native powers of Hindustan.

In addition to his post of Governor-General, Bentinck was also Commander-in-Chief in India. The *Meerut Universal Magazine* for 1835, in reviewing his career in the latter capacity, wrote as follows :

"A more unfit person for a Commander-in-Chief than Lord William Bentinck it would have been difficult for any Ministry to pitch upon, nor does it reflect credit upon the Court of Directors, the Board of Control, or his Majesty's Government, that for the sake of effecting a saving of some six or seven thousand pounds a year, the welfare and discipline of an Army . . . should have been risked, or their interests sacrificed.

"The first acts of Lord William Bentinck on assuming the command of the Army were taken with a view to reflect disgrace on the rule of his predecessor, and in pursuance of this system all descriptions of complaints were not only received but fostered at headquarters, squabbles long set at rest were carefully raked from their ashes—nourished into representation, enquiries and courts martial, and the curious observer will find, that a large majority of the causes submitted to the decision of the military tribunals, were manufactured out of the disputes that occurred in the time of Sir Edward Barnes. . . . His Lordship loved to live in an atmosphere of complaints, and so long as he received a due quantity, considered that the Army must be progressing to a state of improvement.

"With a man so singularly lauded for benevolence and humanity as Lord William Bentinck was, it is extraordinary how many acts we find that would lead the casual observer to a belief, that his

\* p. 334.

† (P. 409.)

Lordship was swayed by a selfish disregard of every one but himself or his immediate parasites. . . .

"Lord William is very fond of Rupees—Lord William loved the Rupees."

In the administration of domestic affairs Bentinck did little to promote the interests of the natives of India. Indeed, some of his measures were best calculated to make the natives miserable and keep them in subjection. Before his time, the executive and judicial functions were not combined in the same individual. But he combined them. That this measure has been a great curse to the people of Hindustan is evident from the fact that the Indian National Congress from its very birth has been praying for the separation of judicial and executive functions—a request which that astute Irish Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, pronounced to be "a counsel of perfection."

Lord William Bentinck resumed rent-free lands. Wrote the *Meerut Universal Magazine* : \*

"By an old regulation of Government, no persons holding *lakhiraj* or rent-free lands could be deprived of them, until a proper judicial investigation had been instituted on his claim, and a final decree past by the Supreme Court. Soon after Lord William Bentinck's arrival in India, this regulation was repealed, and the Collector was authorised to dispossess the holder of such tax-free lands, by his own authority, without reference to any judicial inquiry, if the Collector should be of opinion after such inquiry as might satisfy himself, that the title of the proprietor was invalid. It is therein enacted (Sec. I. Art. I) that 'such decision of the Collector shall have the force and effect of a decree,' also that it shall not be necessary for him to transmit his proceedings to the Board of Revenue,' but that 'the party dispossessed might appeal, and by Art. 3 whether an appeal be filed or not, 'that it shall and may be lawful,' for the Collector immediately to carry into effect his decision by attaching and assessing the lands'. . . .

"Only imagine, an English Collector of taxes, summoning the head of the Portland family to produce his title to the estates he now holds, and 'satisfying himself that the title is invalid,, proceeds immediately to carry into effect his decision, by attaching and assessing the lands'. . . . Yet such an act has Lord William Bentinck perpetrated on the natives of India, on a people he declares to be oppressed and degraded, showing throughout, a cunning and hypocrisy, at which his countrymen must blush. The regulation was public, the suspension of the regulation was public, but the last orders for carrying the original regulation into effect secret. Thus, by a measure more arbitrary than any that can be found in the History of the darkest ages of our own country, have families, that were in comparative affluence, been hurled into the depths of poverty, hundreds and thousands, who considered themselves beyond the reach of adversity, cast upon the world to seek their bread.

"This is what Lord William Bentinck has done for India."

Bentinck did not want the existence of an Indian aristocracy. Therefore he favoured the resumption of estates whose owners died without male issue. It was with reference to this that Malcolm, on the eve of his retirement from the office of Governor of Bombay, wrote in his farewell Minute of 30th November, 1830 :

"I have endeavoured through life (and shall as long as I am employed) to mitigate what I deem the evil effects produced by a cold and inflexible policy, which, substituting in all cases attention to principles for consideration of persons, runs counter to the feelings and usages of natives. I know the change must take place, but I desire it should be gradual, and I cannot convince myself that either our financial or political interest will be promoted by the adoption of measures that consign to early extinction the family of the jagheerdar of Vinchoor, or that of a man of rank and character like Balla Sahib Rastia, or Rajah Bahadoor, and several others belonging to

\* Vol. I, p. 12.

that class, whose estates it is the opinion of the Right honourable the Governor-General in Council should be resumed. .... I think it is to be regretted these chiefs were ever placed in possession of estates not intended to be conferred on their heirs according to the laws and usages of their tribes, or when this was done, that it was not specifically stated in their grants that no collateral succession or adoption would in any case be admitted, and a resolution taken never to deviate from the rule laid down.”\*

His great aim was to anglicise and denationalise the natives of India. He did not conceal it : because he came to believe that the anglicisation of India would be of material advantage to England. With this object, among others, in view, he tried his best to introduce English as the court language in India. (*Vide* passages quoted from blue books in *The Modern Review* for February, 1910, pp. 177-179.)

Knowing the views and opinions of Bentinck, Macaulay also did not hesitate to side with the Anglicists and wrote that minute which made English the medium of instruction in India. That minute considerably retarded the growth of the vernaculars of India.

In my *History of Education in India under the rule of the East India Company*† I have stated that Bentinck of set purpose selected Macaulay to decide the very important controversy between the occidentalists and orientalists. That brilliant English essayist's Minute on Education is a counterpart of William Thackeray's Minute, from which an extract has already been given before. Both the minutes were penned with the object of “suppressing deep thought” amongst Indians and were most probably inspired by Bentinck.

In the chapter on the Mutiny at Vellore extracts have been given from the Revd. Mr. Sydney Smith's article in the *Edinburgh Review* for 1807 to show the encouragement afforded by Bentinck to Christian Missionaries to convert the “heathens” of India. The introduction of English education in this country was conceived with the same object in view. Macaulay looked upon it as a step that would lead to the conversion of Indians to Christianity. Thus in 1836, Macaulay wrote to his father :

“It is my firm belief if our plans of education are followed up there will not be a single idolator among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence.”

Commenting on the above, the *Indian Daily News* for March 30, 1909 wrote :

“Lord Macaulay's triumph...was really the triumph of a deliberate intention to undermine the religious and social life of India....how behind his splendid phrases, there lay quite a different view.”

Bentinck was thwarted from accomplishing his purpose in Madras by the outbreak at Vellore and his subsequent recall. As Governor-General, he tried to carry into execution his long-cherished intention and so appointed Macaulay, the youngest of his councillors and without any personal experience of Indian life, to preside over the committee of Anglicists and orientalists.

Bentinck did all that lay in his power to give impetus to the settlement and

\* Vol. VI—Political or Foreign Minutes of Evidence before the Parliamentary Committee of 1882. (The italics are ours).

† Pp. 88, *et seq.*

colonization in India of his co-religionists and compatriots. The free resort of his countrymen to India would lead, he thought, to the Anglicisation of the natives, which would be advantageous to England.

He is considered to be a great philanthropist, because he passed that act which prevented the immolation of widows, known as *Suttee*. Of course, it was the right thing to do. But the ground had been paved, as it were, for him by the writings of Raja Ram Mohun Roy. If the credit is mainly due to anybody for the abolition of *Suttee*, it is to Ram Mohun Roy.\* Bentinck was obliged to him, for it was not Bentinck but Ram Mohun Roy who was the object of obloquy and the target for ridicule and attack of the Hindus; for they knew that without the powerful aid of Ram Mohun, Bentinck would not and could not have ventured to enact the abolition of *Suttee*. But such was the sense of gratitude possessed by Bentinck that he put obstacles in the way of Ram Mohun Roy's proceeding to England as ambassador of the King of Delhi and did not recognise the title of Raja which the Mugal King had honoured him with.

It is said that Bentinck was a friend of the natives, because he recognised their claims to more extensive employment in the service of the State and for the posts of Deputy Collectors created during his regime. It was not from any philanthropic considerations that the natives were more widely employed. It was financial necessity which obliged the authorities to resort to native agency,—the same necessity which led to the curtailment of the *batta* of the civil and military officers and which made Bentinck so unpopular with his countrymen in India.

By right, all the appointments in the public services of India belong to the natives, because they are the children of the soil and also the taxpayers. Even if Bentinck employed them more extensively, we do not see any reason why he should be thanked or considered a philanthropist for merely meting out a little justice to them.†

It should be remembered that Bentinck was no advocate of high education in India. This will be gathered from the following from the Minute of Sir Charles Metcalfe, dated the 16th May, 1835 :

"His Lordship (Bentinck). however, sees further danger in the spread of knowledge and the

\* Lieutenant A. White, a contemporary of Ram Mohun Roy, writes in his "Considerations on the State of British India," pp. 60-91 :

"This enlightened Hindoo Ram Mohun has rendered a signal service to his countrymen in exposing the cruelty and injustice of the practice which condemns a widow to sacrifice herself on the funeral pile of her husband, . . ."

† Prof. H. H. Wilson, in his continuation of Mill's *History of British India* in a footnote in Book III. Chapter VI. writes :

"Regulation V. 1831. The credit of this enactment has sometimes been given exclusively to Lord Bentinck, but this is an injustice. That his Lordship unreservedly admitted the principle, and zealously carried into practice the employment of respectable natives in the administration of public affairs, is undoubtedly true, but the justice and necessity of the measure had been fully recognised, both in India and England, long before Lord W. Bentinck's appointment; and the provisions of the Regulation here cited were based, as mentioned in the Regulation, upon the suggestions and orders of the Court of Directors, prior to the arrival in India of the actual Governor-General."

operations of the Press. I do not, for my own part, anticipate danger as a certain consequence from these causes."

Regarding the credit given to Lord Bentinck for the liberty of the press, the *Meerut Universal Magazine* (Vol. 1. 119) wrote :

"There are men, perhaps, who may tell us that the Indian community should be thankful for the miscalled liberty allowed during the rule of Lord William Bentinck. If any such can be found, shame on them, for spaniel like, they would lick the hand that chastised. Lord William Bentinck dared not to attack the press !

"Had he raised his finger against the Indian Press, he would have been hooted by his constituents on his return to England ! His expectations from the party with which he is allied, (together with his political reputation, small as it is,) were greater than those of a pension from the East India Company !!! For these reasons he dared not ; had he not dreaded an exposure in England his Lordship would not have hesitated for an instant in the course to be pursued. But times were changed since his Lordship governed the Madras Presidency, and let the reader contrast the conduct of Lord William Bentinck, in refusing permission to Sir William Gwillim to publish his address to a jury, an address written by a Judge, an address spoken by that Judge when presiding on the judgement seat of the highest tribunal, with the same Lord William's false pretensions to popular esteem, held forth while in Bengal.

"It is necessary in my opinion, for the public safety, that the press in India should be kept under the most rigid control. It matters not from what pen the dangerous matter may issue, the higher the authority the greater the mischief." (Lord William Bentinck at Madras.)

"This is the language of the man, who 'knew no subject which the press might not freely discuss,' this is the man who for seven years induced the Indian European community to believe that they were enjoying freedom of discussion, the man who duped them with the shadow for the substance ; yet the man, who in the words of Sir James Mackintosh, well knew "that to inform the public of the conduct of those who administer public affairs, requires courage and conscious security. If it is not done boldly, it cannot be done effectually, and it is not from writers trembling under the up-lifted scourge, that we are to hope for a proper discharge of the duty."

The Governor-General's view regarding the acceleration of communications between England and India was that by this "the natives of India in person would be enabled to bring their complaints and grievances before the authorities and the country," . . . and by which "disinterested travellers would have it in their power to report to their country at home the nature and circumstances of this distant portion of the Empire." The result, he trusted, would be "to rouse the shameful apathy and indifference of Great Britain to the concerns of India."\*

But there is a difference between what Bentinck professed and what he practised. Had he been sincere in the view expressed above he would have treated Rām Mohun Roy's mission to England on behalf of the Mugal Emperor of Delhi, or, that of the King of Oudh quite differently from what he did.

That Bentinck's seven years' rule from 1828-1835 was on the whole beneficial to the natives of the country is a myth. His foreign policy was aggressive and his domestic policy destructive of the best interests of the children of the soil.

\* (Ludlow's *British India*, Vol. II, pp. 98-99).

## CHAPTER LXVIII

### REFLECTIONS ON THE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S CHARTER OF 1833

It was during the Governor-Generalship of Lord William Bentinck, that the Charter of the East India Company was renewed in 1833. A few reflections on that Charter are given below.

The early thirties of the nineteenth century were very stirring times in England. It was not any war or prospect of it that created the stir, but it was due to domestic causes. Industrial development had taken place to such a large extent, the urban population had so largely increased, education also was making such rapid strides, that Parliamentary Reform became absolutely necessary. Hence the Reform Bill was on the legislative anvil. But political reforms in England did not auger good for India. No greater mistaken notion can be entertained than the theory broached by the late Mr. R. C. Dutt when he said that

"the administration of India is determined by the current of opinions in England, that progress in India is stimulated by English progress, and that the history of India under British rule is shaped by those great influences which make for reforms in Europe. This is a fact which is often overlooked by the historians of India, but Indian history is unintelligible to us without this explanation. From the time of the great Pitt to the time of Mr. Gladstone, English influences have inspired the rulers of India. English history and Indian history have run in parallel streams."

No, just the reverse of the above is true. The interests of the people of England are not identical with but diametrically opposed to, those of the people of this country. Their interests and our interests clash. Hence there can be no community of interests between the English and the Indian. So the more power the common people of England obtained, they did not turn it to account for the benefit of the natives of India but for their own gain. Sir John Malcolm, in his *Political History of India*, writes :

"It has been well observed by an able anonymous author, who has written a history of the early period of the East India Company, that unlimited power in the hands of a single person may be prevented from degenerating into acts of tyranny by the terrors of ignominy, or by personal fears. But a body of men vested with authority, is seldom swayed by restraint of either kind, as they derive, individually, but little applause from their best measures, so the portion of infamy which may fall to each for the worst public action is too small to affect personal character. Having therefore, no generous inducement to follow virtue, the most sordid passions frequently lead them into vice. It is from this circumstance that the decisions of public bodies sometimes partake of that mortifying species of tyranny which is incapable of redress, and yet is beyond revenge. These observations may be applied, without the least injustice, to the actions of the Indian Company both at home and abroad. Avarice, the most obstinate and hardened passion of the human mind, being the first principle of commerce, was the original bond of their union, and humanity, justice and even policy, gave way to the prospect or love of gain."



Regarding the Reform Act of 1832, Mr. John Morley in his *Life of Mr. Cobden* writes that it

"stirred up social aspirations which the Liberal Governments of the next ten years after the passing of the Act, were utterly unable to satisfy."

If we remember the above, we shall be able to understand that the Charter Act of 1833 following on the Reform Act of 1832 was more advantageous to the people of England than to those of India. Of course, on the occasion of the passing of that Act, much cant and idle talk were indulged in by those who professed radical views. The most noteworthy of these talkers was Mr. Thomas Babington (afterwards Lord) Macaulay. Very noble thoughts are embodied in the speech which he delivered from his place in the House of Commons on the 10th of July, 1833. Macaulay was the only son of his father Zachariah Macaulay, a friend of William Wilberforce and the *Christian* Director of the East India Company, Mr. Charles Grant. T. B. Macaulay, from his very infancy, having come in contact with Mr. Charles Grant, must have imperceptibly, but silently and steadily, imbibed the latter's views on Indian questions. For Macaulay's famous speech of 1833 is in many respects almost a paraphrase, although in eloquent phrases, of Mr. Grant's pamphlet on the State of Society in Asia. Macaulay said :

"To the great trading nation, to the great manufacturing nation, no progress which any portion of the human race can make in knowledge, in taste for the conveniences of life or in the wealth by which those conveniences are produced, can be matter of indifference. It is scarcely possible to calculate the benefit which we might derive from the diffusion of European civilisation among the vast population of the East. ... To trade with civilised men is infinitely more profitable than to govern savages."

Compare the above with what Mr. Charles Grant wrote in the pamphlet above referred to. He wrote .

"In every progressive step of this work, we shall also serve the original design with which we visited India, that design still so important to this country,—the extension of our commerce. Why is it that so few of our manufactures and commodities are vended there? Not merely because the taste of the people is not generally formed to the use of them, but because they have not the means of purchasing them. Let invention be once awakened among them,...let them acquire a relish...for the beauties and refinements, endlessly diversified, of European art and science, and we shall hence obtain for ourselves the supply of four and twenty millions of distant subjects. How greatly will our country be thus aided in rising still superior to all her difficulties, and how stable, as well as unrivalled, may we hope our commerce will be, when we thus rear it on right principles, and make it the means of their extension? . and wherever, we may venture to say, our principles and language are introduced, our commerce will follow." \*

It was Mr. Grant's idea to teach the natives of India the English language, for it would be politically advantageous to England. Similar thoughts dominated Macaulay's advocacy of making English the medium of instruction in this country.

But Macaulay was not sincere when he grandiloquently said:

"Are we to keep the people of India ignorant in order that we may keep them submissive? Or

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\* General Appendix to Report from Select Committee on the affairs of the East India Company, London, 1832, page 88.

do you think that we can give them knowledge without awakening ambition? Or do we mean to awaken ambition and to provide it with no legitimate vent? Who will answer any of these questions in the affirmative? Yet one of them must be answered in the affirmative, by every person who maintains that we ought permanently to exclude the natives from high office.....

"It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system, that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government, that having become instructed in European knowledge, they may in some future age, demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or retard it."

Regarding Macaulay, Mr. Digby in his *Prosperous British India*, truly writes :

"The climax is reached by Thomas Babington Macaulay, the Member for Leeds, who was in himself—as Law Member in India, as Member of Parliament afterwards—to show that much of what he said was of the tongue merely and not of the heart."

Macaulay was one of those regarding whom Sir Bartle Frere, Governor of Bombay, said :

"Many of them are anxious for the improvement of the natives, provided it be effected in their own—the European fashion, but not one of them I ever met has a particle of real sympathy with any native who does not belong to the small anglicised class."

On Macaulay should be fathered the phrase "benevolent despotism," on which principle, according to him, the British administration of India should be conducted. He wrote :

"We know that India cannot have a free government. But she may have the next best thing—a firm and impartial despotism."

But Macaulay said justly that.

"Of all forms of tyranny I believe the worst is that of a nation over a nation."

President Abraham Lincoln wrote :

"There is no man good enough to govern another man. It is equally true that there is no nation good enough to govern another nation."

A German author has also observed :

"The weight of a foreign yoke ....is more than ever galling if not supported upon a community of interests. The strong aversion which springs from the contact of characters fundamentally discordant can never be overcome even by consideration of the mutual advantages to be gained from the union, however great the advantages may be. Repugnance and animosity, purely sentimental in their origin, and impossible of suppression by any process of intellectual exercise, are influences as important in national as in individual life."

*History of the World*, Vol. VIII, p. 144.

So the phrase "benevolent despotism" has hardly any meaning.

The framers of the Charter Act of 1833, among whom Macaulay played a very prominent part, wanted to govern India on the principle of "benevolent despotism." \*

\* Of course much cant and nonsense is talked by those Britishers who say that England holds India in trust and for the benefit of the Indian people. Sir Bartle Frere in his convocation speech of the Bombay University in 1867 said :

"From the days of Clive and Warren Hastings to this hour, there has ever been a continued protest on the part of those who mould the thought and direct the action of the British nation,

One has to read carefully and between the lines of the above Act and he will be convinced that it was meant for the benefit of the people of England. This Act imposed on India very heavy financial burdens. India was already groaning under heavy taxes, but nothing was done to relieve her. It amplified and extended the provisions of the Charter Act of 1813 intended to benefit the Britishers. The framers of the Act having done so much for the welfare of their own co-religionists and compatriots, it was but natural for them to put on the mask of philanthropy to cover their ulterior designs. That mask of philanthropy is exhibited in section 87 of that Act. Of course they knew that it was not going to be given effect to.

This Act intensified the impetus to the exploitation of India. British India was then unable to pay the heavy expenses of the costly administration it was saddled with. Every year's budget showed a deficit. It was difficult to make both ends meet. Perhaps it was, therefore, that in a secret conclave of the honorable and Christian gentlemen who constituted the Liberal ministry of the day, the conspiracy to annihilate the then existing native principalities was hatched. We make this statement on the authority of General Briggs. In a letter to Major Evans Bell, dated 8th May 1872, Briggs wrote :

"But perhaps I ought not to attribute so much to the personal or free action of Lord Dalhousie, for I have good reason to believe that in Lord Auckland's time, long before the appointment of Lord Dalhousie, there was a conclave of Whig Ministers and magnates at Lord Lansdowne's place, Bowood, to discuss the policy of upholding or of absorbing the Native States, and it was decided that we should avail ourselves of all opportunities for adding to our territories and revenues at the expense of our allies and of stipendiary Princes like the Rajah of Tanjore and the Nawabs of the Carnatic and Bengal. In this direction the Bombay Government set the example by annexing the inconsiderable principality of Colaba, under the pretext that an adopted heir had no right of succession. This led the way to the more important and more impolitic cases, under Lord Dalhousie, of Jhansi and Nagpore. Dalhousie only acted on the policy prescribed by the Ministers in England." *Memoir of General John Briggs*, p. 277.

This only can satisfactorily account for the violation of the most sacred and solemn treaties which the British had entered into with the Native Princes of India, and also of that provision of the Charter Act of 1793 which solemnly declared :

"That to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India, are measures repugnant to the *wish, honour* and policy of the nation,"

From what we have already said it must be patent to all that the Charter Act of 1833, like its predecessor of 1813, was meant to circumscribe the liberties enjoyed by the Indian people, to make their lot heavy, and to saddle them with the imposition of new taxes. Clause 87 of this Act was merely a make-believe sort of thing, meant, as a blind to cover the ulterior designs of the people of England in India.

against the doctrine that India is to be administered in any other spirit than as a trust from God for the good government of many millions of His creatures."

A Christian judge of one of the Indian High Courts has recently said that India should be governed not in the interests of Indians but for those of Englishmen and that no one appointed the latter as trustors or trustees for Indians! India is a conquered country and therefore Indians have no rights and privileges.

The India Reform Society, founded in England, on Saturday, the 12th of March, 1853, issued from time to time, tracts on Indian subjects for the enlightenment of the people of England. The first tract which this Society issued was headed, "The Government of India since 1834." In it are brought together all the facts which prove that the East India Company did not govern India so well as to deserve to have its charter renewed in 1853. A few extracts from this tract are given below :

"The enquiry in hand, and the issue now raised by the effluxion of the Charter Act can not be better stated than in the language used by the late King. It denote in the simplest terms, the purpose of the Statute—the improvement and happiness of the natives of India, and by doing so it enables the country and the legislature to apply to its success or failure, tests of the most infallible description. For there is nothing in this world so patent and certain, and easily ascertainable as good government. . . . The first step in the enquiry is, therefore, to apply some of the tests of good government to the Government of India, as it has been administered under the system established in 1833.

#### "I. PEACE.

"Perhaps the most important of these tests is Peace....

"Now since 1834, the Government of India, as established in the preceding year, has, out of the nineteen years that have passed, been for fifteen of them in a state of war....

"These wars were not necessary for the safety,—they have retarded the improvement, and diminished the happiness of the Natives of India, whilst they have exhausted the resources of the Government; but they were the natural result of the system established in 1833; for it wanted the responsibility and the 'correctives' which alone keep human rulers at peace.

"Applying then, the test of Peace to the last twenty years, what opportunity, what means, what chances can a Government occupied more or less with war for fifteen of those years, have had of working out the improvement and the happiness of the Natives?...

#### "II. FINANCES.

... Pecuniary Prosperity being the second great test of good Government everywhere.

"In England a deficit in the Treasury is the most heinous of all Government offences...Turn to India, and what, during the last fourteen years, do we find? Deficit—deficit—deficit.

"When the present system of Government was framed in 1833, the military charges of India were about eight millions sterling, or 49 per cent. of its net revenue. Twenty years of anticipated 'improvement and happiness' have now almost elapsed and the military charges now exceed twelve millions sterling and eat up 56 per cent. of the net revenue....These are the first results of the legislation of 1833, which arrest our path in clearing the way for legislation in 1853.

#### "III. MATERIAL IMPROVEMENTS.

"Of course, a system of government which in the last twenty years has gone on increasing its military expenditure from eight to twelve millions sterling, and thus adding to its debt, has had little to spend on what are, in such a country as India, the next evidence of good government—Public Works....So that out of a revenue exceeding 21 millions sterling the rate of Government expenditure on public works has, according to Mr. Campbell, been 2¼ per cent., or less than £500,000 a year, spread over a country as large as Europe. . "And of these sums so debited against public works, some portion is, it must be borne in mind, spent on barracks and purely military undertakings. The figures, too, include the cost of superintendence, which has some times wasted 70 per cent. of the outlay.

#### "IV. CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.

"But, in spite of war, deficit and want of roads, bridges, harbours, and public works,—in spite of this, the condition of the People may have improved during the last twenty years ? Try the Act of 1833, then by this test. There can be none better or surer."

The writer then goes on to show from official accounts the miserable condition of the Bengal ryot under the Zemindary system—the Madras ryot under the Ryotwary and the Bombay ryot under the composite system. Then he concludes as follows :

"But it is on India as a whole that attention must be fixed, and how sad the condition of the cultivator is in Bengal, with a population of 40 millions, how far worse it is in Madras with its 22 millions and how bad it is in Bombay with its 10 millions, the evidence thus briefly produced... will give some general idea of. It is not merely cultivation that is depressed, it is society itself that is being gradually destroyed. The race of native gentry has already almost everywhere disappeared, and a new danger has arisen—that in another generation or two, the cultivators will not be worth having as subjects. For moral debasement is the inevitable consequence of physical depression.. This prospect may be deemed 'satisfactory' by the persons responsible for it. But to India it is ruin and destruction, to England it is danger and disgrace."

#### "V. LAW AND JUSTICE."

"The state of the Law, the forms of legal procedure, and the Administration of justice—these form another test by which to try the legislation of 1833. And these, in the case of that Act, are a special and peculiar test. For law Reform was not only declared to be one of its most prominent objects, but it contained large and costly provisions to advance that priceless object.

Then, as to the actual state and administration of civil law. In the Regulation Provinces there is nothing worthy of name of law, but to a system unworthy that sacred name, are appended cumbrous legal forms and legal tax. To enter into the courts of what is called justice, it is not only necessary that you should have a plaintiff, but money to pay (not lawyers but) the Government. So that to all the Company's subjects who cannot commence the search of justice by paying a tax to the Government, the doors of the courts are closed, for them there is neither law nor justice. And having money, what, when admitted, do they find ? Judges, as Mr. Campbell confesses, a scandal to the British name.

"For fifteen years has the criminal law, as administered by the Company's courts, been condemned by Government itself. It is just as fit for the Christian people of this realm as for the Hindu subjects of the Queen in India..."

#### "VI. POLICE.

"If there be little or no criminal law, there is, however, a Police. But it has, we quote the declaration of 1252 British and other Christian Inhabitants of Calcutta and Lower Bengal in their Petition to the House of Commons, 'not only failed to effect the prevention of crimes, the apprehension of offenders, and the protection of life and property, but it has become the engine of oppression and a great cause of the corruption of the people.'.....

".....Tried then by the tests of law, justice, and crime, the legislation of 1833 has not resulted in the improvement and happiness of the natives of India."

#### "VII. EDUCATION.

"Measure the system of 1833 by the wand of Education, short as we may choose to make it, and the result is worse still. So paltry an item of expenditure is Native Education that it does not even constitute an item in the yearly Finance Accounts laid before Parliament. It is, therefore, impossible to say what percentage of a net revenue of twenty-one millions sterling, is spent on

this means of promoting the improvement and happiness of the Natives. But this is well known, that, whereas in Hindoo times every village community had its school, our destruction of village societies or municipalities has deprived the Natives of their schools, such as they were, and has substituted nothing in their stead.....In short, out of these 22 millions of people the Indian Government yearly educates 1601 And when in Bengal the richer natives do send their sons to England for education, the young men, returning competent for, are refused Government employment on the same terms and on the same rank as Europeans. Within the last five years a Hindoo young gentleman carried off several medical prizes at University College, and received the Diploma of M. D. The Court of Directors, and individual Directors were applied to by some of the most eminent of the retired public servants of India to give Dr. Chuckerbutty a commission as Surgeon in a Native Regiment, but the request was refused. And by gentlemen, too, who, it stands in evidence, have at home spent out of Indian taxation during the last twenty years the enormous sum of £53,000 in public banquets and more select house dinners. It is not by such educational expenditure, or by such treatment when native gentlemen do educate themselves, that 'the improvement and happiness of the natives of India' can be promoted.

#### "VIII, PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT OF THE NATIVES.

"And the insufficiency of this Test of Education naturally brings us to another, *viz.*, the employment of Natives. In our earlier Indian career, Natives were employed in the most important and confidential posts of our government. Our regiments were officered by Natives; in many places we had Native agents and representatives; everywhere we were then obliged to make use of native talent. But in those days Indian salaries were at least moderate. But gradually this use of native ability was displaced, and every post of profit, of trust, of value, transferred, at enormous addition to the cost of government—to Englishmen, until at last it became part and parcel of our established policy. The legislation of 1833, however, attempted to remedy this monstrous injustice, by enacting that none should be excluded from any office by reason of religion, place of birth, descent, or colour. But so far from the enactment having remedied the wrong, 'this provision' was, according to Mr. Campbell, 'a mere flourish of trumpets and of no practical effect whatever as far as the natives are concerned.' Indeed, according to him, it has been prejudicial rather than advantageous to native employment; 'for,' he adds, 'the only effect has been to open to Europeans offices originally intended for natives.'

"The division between the Covenanted and Uncovenanted Services is still kept up; though the covenant itself is absurd and ridiculous, now that the East India Company has nothing to do with trade. And the purpose for which it is maintained is to draw an artificial line by means of which the Natives may continue, however educated, able, and competent, to be excluded from all high and lucrative employment. The Act of 1833 declares that religion, birth, and colour shall not exclude any man from any office. But the Government of India refuses to allow any native, Hindoo, Mahomedan, or Parsee, admission into its covenanted service. Thus it defeats, by a rule of its own, the provision of the legislature of 1833, which particularly aimed at promoting 'the improvement and happiness' of the natives of India, by employing them in the public service; and by their employment reducing the cost of Government. Some few thousands—3,000 or 4,000 out of 150 millions—do indeed get small posts, worth on an average some £30 a year. But any real share in Government administration, trust, and responsibility, is denied the people of India. Yet, in Lord Grey's work on the *Colonial Administration of Lord John Russell's Government*, he is found boasting, how on, the Gold Coast of Africa; the Governor summoned its Chiefs into council; and how, out of this rude Negro Parliament England is there creating an African nation.

"But in India, a people 'learned in all the arts of polished life, when we were yet in the woods,' less favoured than the Fantees of Cape Coast Castle, are proscribed as a race of incompetent, helpless incapables, and condemned to everlasting inferiority in lands which their forefathers made famous.

## "IX. POPULAR CONTENTMENT

"Are then the people of India content with the working of the legislation of 1833 ? It would be strange if they were, and they are not. They do not rebel, they do not resist, they do not rise against the Indian Government, . . . ; for, under the British rule the power of the Government is too strong and well organised for a successful resort to these violent modes of manifesting public opinion. But now that the opportunity has arisen—now that there is a chance of improvement, they petition Parliament. And what say their petitions ? That they are happy and prosperous ? That they are satisfied with the results of the Act of 1833 ? That they regard its renewal with contentment and hope ? Nothing of the sort. The very reverse,...

"The people of Madras complain that the whole framework of society has been overthrown, to their injury, and almost to their ruin.

"They complain that salt, the only condiment for their tasteless rice, and without which neither they nor their cattle can live, is a Government monopoly.

"They complain that not only are they taxed for their shops in towns, and for stalls and sheds on road sides, but for each tool and implement, of the trades, nay, for their very knives, *'the cost of which,'* they tell Parliament, *'is frequently exceeded six times over by the Molurphia [Tax] under which the use of them is permitted.'*

"They complain, that in order to raise revenue from ardent spirits, the Government is forcing drunkenness on them, 'a vice,' they add, 'forbidden by Hindu and Mohammedan law.'

"If contentment, therefore, be a test of good government, the Act of 1833 has signally failed."

## X. "HOME CONTROL

"Another test yet remains. The Act of 1833 was proposed as a substitute for a constitution. If we cannot, it was then argued by Mr. Macaulay, on behalf of Lord Grey's Government, safely entrust the people of India with popular rights and privileges, we will at least have a constituency at home bound by their own interests to watch over and protect them, a constituency which, to use his exact words, *'shall feel any disorder in the finances of India in the disorder of their own household affairs'*; Has this anticipation been realized—has this intention been fulfilled ? No, disorders there have been for fifteen years in the finances of India : but those disorders have not been felt in the 'household affairs' of the proprietors of East India stock. Despite Indian deficits, English dividends of ten and a half per cent, have been regularly maintained and 'well and truly paid' And thus India has lost that English security for good government which Mr. Macaulay announced it was a design of the Act of 1833 to establish.

"But it is unnecessary, . . . to pursue the enquiry further. Enough has been sketched, . . . to make rational, benevolent, and patriotic men hesitate when asked to consent to a renewal of the Act of 1833, enough has been stated to make them doubt whether the present system of Government is even capable of improvement, enough, we believe, to convince all impartial men that a new plan of Indian administration must be cast."

It was after passing the Act of 1833, that the Company deliberately took the step which had for its object the annexation of all the native states of India by any means—fair or foul—within their power.

## CHAPTER LXIX

### MACAULAY IN INDIA

Macaulay was a needy adventurer who came out to this country to shake the pagoda tree and grow rich at the expense of the children of the soil, some of whom he had not the scruple to abuse to his heart's content. In a letter to his sister, who shared his "exile" to India, Macaulay wrote on 17th August, 1833 :

"At present the plain fact is that I can continue to be a public man only while I can continue in office. If I left my place in the Government, I must leave my seat in Parliament too. For I must live, I can live only by my pen and it is absolutely impossible for any man to write enough to procure him a decent subsistence, and at the same time to take an active part in politics. . . . I have never made more than two hundred a year by my pen. I could not support myself in comfort on less than five hundred, and I shall in all probability have many others to support. The prospects of our family are, if possible, darker than ever."

So he thought of coming out to India to make his fortune. The post of the Law Member was

"of the highest dignity and consideration. The salary is ten thousand pounds a year. I am assured by persons who know Calcutta intimately and have themselves mixed in the highest circles and held the highest offices at that Presidency, that I may live in splendour there for five thousands a year, and may save the rest of the salary with the accruing interest. I may therefore hope to return to England, at only thirty-nine, in the full vigour of life, with a fortune of thirty thousand pounds. A larger fortune I never desired."

It should be noted that he also received £5000 a year as Law Commissioner. This vast sum was paid to him for nothing.

The appointment of Macaulay to the post of Law Member was of the nature of a jobbery. H. H. Wilson writes :

"The power of legislating for all persons and for all courts of justice was advantageously vested in the supreme Government, but it might be doubted whether the association of the Chief Justice as a legal member of the council would not have more effectively and economically answered the purpose, than the special appointment of *an individual from England unfamiliar with the law or the practice of the Indian courts and recommended by no remarkable forensic qualifications.*"

Macaulay largely contributed, both directly, and indirectly, to the genesis of the present unrest in this country. He entertained supreme contempt for everything Indian. His Minute on education was written in such a manner as to outrage the feelings of the people of India. He who was not acquainted with any of the languages of this vast peninsula—nor cared to know anything of the literature of ancient India,—had yet the audacity to pronounce his contemptuous judgment on them !

Before Macaulay had come to India, a controversy had been going on among important personages, about the best method of imparting education to the natives of

\* Mill and Wilson's *History of British India*, Vol. IX., p. 394. The italics are ours



India. Two parties had been formed, called the orientalists and the occidentalists. The orientalists included such distinguished men as Horace Hayman Wilson and the Prinsep brothers. The best known man at that time amongst the occidentalists was the Revd. Dr. Duff. The orientalists were for giving an education to the people of this country exclusively in the oriental languages—both classical and modern. The occidentalists, on the other hand, ignored more or less the claims of the oriental languages, and wished that English should be made the medium of instruction. As far back as 1826, the great Raja Ram Mohun Roy had addressed a letter on the subject to Lord Amherst, the then Governor-General of India.\* That great Hindu Reformer was an occidentalist, but not of the type of Macaulay. He was a patriot. He favoured the idea that English should be taught as a second language, but should not be made the medium of instruction.

After his arrival in India, Macaulay also took part in the controversy. He presided over the deliberations of the two parties. The orientalists and occidentalists were equally divided, and the casting vote of Macaulay as President defeated the orientalists.

There can be no doubt that by making English the medium of instruction he wanted to benefit his own country, and at the same time to denationalise the people of India. He wrote to his father in 1836 :

"It is my firm belief that if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolator among the respectable classes in Bengal, thirty years hence."†

Macaulay's object was to undermine the social and religious institutions of India. This is now recognised by the better class of English journalists. *The Indian Daily News*, for instance, wrote in its leader on March 29, 1909, that—

"Lord Macaulay's triumph over the Oriental School, headed by Dr. Wilson, was really the triumph of a deliberate intention to undermine the religious and social life of India."

Thus it would appear, that in all that he did in and for India Macaulay was not swayed by any consideration or motive of philanthropy or altruism, but by selfishness—if not quite sordid, at the best enlightened.

The post of the Law Member was created and the natives of this country were saddled with the heavy burden of his pay and allowances, because he was expected to make such laws and regulations as would ensure peace and prosperity in India. In their letter, dated 10th December, 1834, the Court of Directors wrote to the Government of India:

"His (that is, the Law Member's) will naturally be the principal share, not only in the task of giving shape and connection to the several laws as they pass, but also in the mighty labour of collecting all that local information and calling into view all those general considerations, which belong to each occasion, and of thus enabling the council to embody the abstract and essential principles of good government in regulations adapted to the peculiar habits, character, and institutions of the vast and infinitely diversified people under their sway."

Judged by the above standard, it must be unhesitatingly pronounced that one and

\* See my *History of Education in India under the rule of the East India Company*. Also Part I, Selections from the Educational Records of the Government of India, by Sir H. Sharp.

† See my *History of Education in India under the Company*, pp. 80 and 105.

all the Law Members from the time of Macaulay downwards were not fitted for the office to which they were appointed and that they neglected, however unintentionally, the duties appertaining to the post.

Had the Court of Directors been sincere in their professions, they should have appointed an Indian and not a Britisher to the then newly created post of Law Member, for none but an Indian can be thoroughly acquainted with the peculiar habits, character, and institutions of the vast and infinitely diversified people of India.

Lord Bentinck's minute, dated 31st July, 1834, shows the difficulties of the situation in which the Law Member was placed:

"It is to this particular point, the exclusion of the fourth member from the ordinary sitting of the council, to which I wish particularly to advert, as detracting very much from his usefulness, if not incapacitating him from the very important duties confided to him by the Legislature. Mr. Macaulay has never been in India, and he and his successors, like the greater part of the past and probably of future Governors and Governor-Generals.... as a stranger to the country for which he is to play the principal part, in making laws and regulations, he certainly may give most useful advice to the council.... Where is he to gain his practical knowledge of the state of societies, of its manners, its feelings and its customs? How is he to discover what there is to remedy, to reform, or to preserve? How is he to discover the abuses or the imperfections of our administration in any of its branches, revenue, judicial, or police? How is he to become acquainted with the effect of the existing laws and institutions upon the immense population? He must learn all this somewhere, or he will be a poor legislator. From the people themselves, the main objects of his care, he will learn nothing. They are not consulted, and hitherto they have had no means of making themselves heard. With them he can have little intercourse, and to the greater part of the European residents, any correct information upon all these details is as inaccessible as to himself. He can only learn his lessons in the same way that all Governors, who have been strangers, have done before him, by following, day by day, the reports of all the functionaries of the Empire.... *The proceedings of the Government contain the only real record of present life, and of the actually passing condition of India, although I must admit that these must remain but a very imperfect index either to the feelings of the people, or to the effect of our laws and regulations, until the natives themselves can be more mixed in their own government and become responsible advisers and partners in the administration.*"

One of the duties of the Law Member was to make laws for the natives of India. This was the effect of the Charter Act of 1833. It has been shown in the last chapter that the laws made did not make for the peace and prosperity of India, and the happiness and enlightenment of its people.

Macaulay drew up the Indian Penal Code. British rule in India had in many respects its prototype in British rule in Ireland. Burke described the Irish Penal Code as

"well-digested and well-disposed in all its parts, a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance, and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man."

The above is more or less applicable to the Indian Penal Code also. The judicial system which British rule introduced in India was the best calculated to give insecurity to life and property and to encourage corruption and litigation. The Marquis of Hastings observed, in a despatch from the Directors to the Bengal Government, dated February, 1819:

"The present state of landed property in Bengal may be brought under review as connected with the judicial administration, since it appears to have originated more from the practical operations of legal decisions than from the fiscal regulations of this Government. The powers which have been assumed by the auction purchasers have completely destroyed every shadow of a right in the tenants, and reduced a happy and comparatively rich peasantry to the lowest stage of penury and indigence. We seem to have accomplished a revolution in the state of society, which has, by some unexpected fatality, proved detrimental to general morals, and by no means conducive to the convenience of our Government, since the first establishment of the zillah Courts in 1780, and from the regular organisation of them in 1793, a new progeny has grown up under our hands, the principal features which show themselves in a generation so formed, beneath the shade of our regulations, are the spirit of litigation, which our judicial establishment cannot meet, and a morality certainly much deteriorated. If in the system or the practical execution of it, we should be found to have relaxed many ties of moral or religious restraint on the conduct of individuals, to have destroyed the influence of former institutions, without substituting any check in their place, to have given loose to the most forward passions of human nature and dissolved the wholesome control of public opinion and private censure, we shall be bound to acknowledge that our regulations have been productive of a state of things which imperiously calls upon us to provide an immediate remedy for so serious a mischief."

The Charter Act of 1833 tried to provide a remedy by the appointment of Macaulay as Law Member of the Supreme Council of the Government of India. Regarding Macaulay's Penal Code, Mr. W. Theobald, a Calcutta Barrister, told the Select Parliamentary Committee on Colonisation and Settlement (India) on the 2nd April, 1858 :

"The principle of English law is that every person who exercises a power or an authority given by law, must exercise that power or authority according to law, and that is a universal principle, and then whether a breach of the law is to involve penalties or simply damages depends, I apprehend, by the principles of English law, merely on the character of the injury. If it is a general injury, or public injury or injury of a serious character, then a breach of the law comes under our penal law, if it is a mere private matter which admits of compensation by damages, then it belongs to the civil law. Now here are the two provisions of Mr. Macaulay's Code :

'Nothing is an offence which is done by a person who is or in good faith believes himself to be commanded by law to do it.'

"Now that establishes an irresponsibility for what is done contrary to law, on what ground? Simply that the person who violates the law, in good faith believes he is acting according to law. *It is monstrous*, I think, it does not require any comment.

"The popularity of this code in England rests, I believe, mainly on the authority and high name of Mr. Macaulay, ...The second proposition in Mr. Macaulay's Code is, 'Nothing is an offence which is done by a person, in the exercise, to the best of his judgment exerted in good faith, of any power given to him by law.'

"I confess I do not quite see in what is the operation of that distinct from the former exception but it is a principle unknown to and utterly at variance with English law, it establishes an irresponsibility upon the part of all persons having powers of any kind by law, and places them in a state of irresponsibility, notwithstanding a breach of the law, and that merely on the ground of supposing that they were doing right and that there was no malice towards the persons whom they have injured. That is a monstrous principle...There is, for instance, the right of private defence. I apprehend the law of England on the right of private defence is a most satisfactory law...The Penal Code is very different."

Of course, the witness was a native of England, and he objected to those sections of the Code which affected the interests of his compatriots in this "land of regrets."

Had he been an Indian, he would have condemned the Code in no measured terms. The Code was calculated to degrade the natives of India, though it is difficult to find out to what extent, if any, it was deliberately intended to do so. Every definition of an offence in it is so comprehensive, that many an innocent act might be construed by it into an offence. On the other hand, there are provisions in the Code, especially in the General Exceptions, which may provide as excellent loopholes for the escape of the really guilty, should occasions arise for it.

Then turning to the question of punishment: How severe are the punishments laid down in the Code for all sorts of offences, is a well-known fact. In no other civilised country under the sun, are offenders so severely punished as they are in India. The principle underlying the law is—once a jail-bird, always a jail-bird. There is an attempt to outcast the criminal from society, no idea of reclaiming him as a citizen. The Code is like an iron machine whose business is to forge fetters for the Indian. It depresses him in spirit and has made him less than a man.

Macaulay looked upon India much in the same way as a landlord looks upon his serfs. He wrote:

"We know that India cannot have a free government. But she may have the next best thing—a firm and impartial despotism."

He had no heart, no sympathy for the longings and ambitions of educated India, nor had he ever tried to understand them. His idea was to bind India with the fetters of legislation, albeit the chain might be gilded. In his famous speech of the 10th of July, 1833, Macaulay said:

"I believe that no country ever stood so much in need of a code of laws as India, and I believe also that there never was a country in which the want might so easily be supplied.....It is a work which especially belongs to a Government like that of India, to an enlightened and paternal despotism."

Digby observes in his *Prosperous British India*, p. 26:

"The climax is reached by Thomas Babington Macaulay, then member for Leeds, who was in himself as Law Member in India, as member of Parliament afterwards—to show that much of what he said was of the tongue merely and not of the heart."

John Bright, in his speech delivered in the House of Commons, on 3rd June, 1853, said:

"I was not in the House when the Right Hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Macaulay) brought forward the Bill of 1833, but I understand it was stated that the Law Commission was to do wonders: yet now we have the evidence of the Right Hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Control that the Report of the Law Commission has ever since been going backwards and forwards, like an unsettled spirit, between this country and India. Mr. Cameron in his evidence said...that the Court of Directors actually sneered at the propositions of their officers for enactments of any kind, and that it was evidently their object to gradually extinguish the Commission altogether. Yet the evidence of Mr. Cameron went to show the extraordinary complication and confusion of the law and law administration over all the British dominions in India."

For nearly twenty years, the various natives of Great Britain who filled the office of the Law Commissioner or Member of the Council of India did absolutely no work, but

they drew during that period the aggregate amount of Rs.35,68,805 from the Indian revenues.

If the proverb of the mountain in labour bringing forth a mouse is applicable to anything in this world, it is to the labour of the Law Commission. The mouse which was after all brought forth was the Indian Penal Code. Of late years, the genus to which the mouse belongs has been credited, rightly or wrongly, with the transmission and propagation of the plague. The Indian Penal Code has proved the propagator and transmitter of a sort of moral plague in India. Steps should be taken to destroy this sort of plague, as they have been to destroy rats.

## CHAPTER LXX

### SIR CHARLES METCALFE'S ADMINISTRATION (1835-1836)

From the retirement of Lord William Bentinck from India in March, 1835, till March 1836, Metcalfe acted as Governor-General of India.

It is not presuming too much to say that he would have followed in the footsteps of Wellesley, had he an opportunity to do so. One of his papers—the very first printed by Kaye in his “Selections from the Papers of Lord Metcalfe”—is a special pleading for the policy pursued by his patron and condemnation of that of Barlow. Extracts from this paper are given below :

“Lord Wellesley's desire was to unite the tranquillity of all the powers of India with our own. How fair, how beautiful, how virtuous, does this system seem, how tenfold fair, beautiful, and virtuous when compared with the other ugly nasty, abominable one....

“There is a loud cry that we are in danger from extended dominion. For my part I can contemplate universal dominion in India without much fear.”

But he was never confirmed in the appointment of Governor-General of India. The authorities of the East India Company, it is alleged, were displeased with him, for his liberating the Indian press. Kaye says :

“The intelligence of what he had done reached them whilst the question of the Governor-Generalship was still an open one. It may have in some measure influenced the decision.”\*

He was no friend of the natives of India, as is evident from his recorded opinions, extracts from which have already been given before. So his appointment as *pucca* Governor-General of India would not have advanced the interest or happiness of Indians.

## CHAPTER LXXI

### LORD AUCKLAND'S ADMINISTRATION (1836—1841)

When the Peel ministry was formed in 1835, their choice fell on Mountstuart Elphinstone as a fit successor to Bentinck. In the Elphinstone memorial meeting held on February 16, 1860, at Willis's Rooms, King Street, St. James's, London, Lord Ellenborough said :

"With the entire concurrence of the late Duke of Wellington, on the formation of Sir Robert Peel's ministry in 1835, he (Lord Ellenborough), had offered to Mr. Elphinstone the high office of Governor-General of India, but the state of his health prevented him from accepting that distinguished position. He had more than once thought, how different might possibly have been at that moment our position in India had he been enabled to hold the situation then offered to him."

Elphinstone has recorded in his journals, the real reason why he declined the offer of the Governor-Generalship of India. This has been already quoted in a previous page.

After Elphinstone's refusal, Peel's Government appointed Lord Heytesbury as Bentinck's successor. But with the change of the ministry, his appointment was cancelled. In *East and West* for August, 1905 (pp. 795—808), a journal at that time conducted by the well-known publicist, Mr. B. M. Malabari of Bombay, Dr. R. Garnett commenced an article on "a forgotten episode of Indian History," by writing that

"The supersession of Lord Heytesbury, appointed Governor-General of India by Sir Robert Peel's ministry of 1834—35, by the Government which succeeded them in the April of the latter year, attracted much less attention than might have been expected at the time, and has received but little notice from historians."

Dr. Garnett assigns the cause of Lord Heytesbury's supersession to his pro-Russian proclivities. He says :

"In our opinion, the principal cause of Lord Heytesbury's supersession by the Melbourne ministry, and of the opposition's languor in espousing his cause, was the suspicion, under which he lay, of Russian sympathies. Although at that time, Russia was twice as far from our Indian frontiers as now, the apprehensions and suspicions of her designs were in many quarters more acute than they are at present."

But to our mind Lord Heytesbury's sympathies with Russia do not seem to be a sufficient cause for his supersession. We suspect that he did not approve of the policy which had then been in vogue to annex Indian states on every possible occasion. Sir John Cam Hobhouse was so much in favour of this, that he was greatly pleased when the Raja of Satara died, for it afforded an opportunity to the Company to annex that principality (see *Story of Satara*, p. 232). It was perhaps this consideration which led Hobhouse to write to the King to revoke Lord Heytesbury's appointment. In his letter dated May 1st, 1835 to the King, he wrote :

"That it has appeared to your Majesty's confidential servants that if Lord Heytesbury were to

proceed to India, his appointment would be, if not formally, at least virtually, their act and they would be justly considered responsible for his Lordship's administration of the Indian Government. As they would not venture to incur such responsibilities except for an individual possessed of their entire confidence, (which cannot be said to be the case with respect to Lord Heytesbury), and as they would not wish to press any other appointment upon the Court of Directors, at the present moment, Sir John Hobhouse would respectfully submit to your Majesty the propriety of waiting for the arrival of William Bentinck before taking any final steps towards deciding upon his successor."

Dr. Garnett in concluding his article writes :

"It only remains to add that, as foreshadowed in Hobhouse's letter to the King, the Governor-Generalship was kept open until Lord William Bentinck's arrival in England in September, when Sir J. Auckland was appointed..."

Thus Bentinck had a voice in settling the appointment of his successor. Metcalfe and he were not friends, for the former differed from the latter in many essential points of Indian administration, and especially the removal of press restrictions, which was not palatable to Bentinck, who, no wonder, did not therefore recommend him to be his successor.\*

The nobleman who was appointed to succeed Bentinck as Governor-General of India was the Earl of Auckland, whose family surname was Eden. He came out to India accompanied by his two sisters, one of whom was the Hon'ble Miss Emily Eden, whose journal "Up the Country" has delighted, for its literary charm, generations of natives of England, as testified by the several editions the work has run into.

The diabolical plot which was masqueraded under the scheme of the navigation of the Indus in the regime of Bentinck was now to be unraveled and it was revealed to the world in the shape of the First Afghan War. Auckland's administration is an important landmark in the history of British India, because that which has been called the "scientific frontier" has been since his time the object which the Christian rulers of India have been in search of, and, like the will-o-the-wisp, it is leading them on and on without its being ever discovered. Improvement in the internal administration of the country, as well as the interests and happiness of the millions of the population of India, has been sacrificed for the sake of this never-to-be-determined "scientific frontier." If Sindh, Panjab, Baluchistan, Chitral and a portion of Afganistan have been

\* The *Edinburgh Review* (No 272 for January to April, 1871) wrote :

"Sir Robert Peel had, with needless haste, selected one of his own adherents, Lord Heytesbury, to succeed Lord William Bentinck in the Governor-Generalship of India, then about to fall vacant. At the first meeting of the Cabinet Hobhouse brought before his colleagues the question of cancelling this nomination, which they decided to do, and the first communication of the new Indian Minister to the King was to advise His Majesty to revoke an appointment which was already signed on the recommendation of the preceding Government. The King reluctantly consented. The 'Chairs' of the East India Company protested against what was called an 'act of power.' Curiously enough, Mr. Gladstone's present Cabinet was called upon at one of its first meetings to entertain the same question. Lord Mayo had been appointed to the Governor-Generalship by Mr. Disraeli and had actually started for Calcutta before the office was vacant. The appointment might have been revoked. But it was wisely and properly determined to confirm it, and the result of Lord Mayo's administration has amply justified that decision." Pp. 318-319.



made to lose their independence, and the chain of subjugation is pressing heavily round the necks of the inhabitants of those regions, it is on the ostensible ground that, for the imperial interests of England, a "scientific frontier" should be delimited for the Indian Empire.

Afghanistan, which was the scene of action and whose politics was the theme of discussion during the regime of Auckland, was at that time ruled by that astute statesman Dost Muhammad Khan. He had ascended the throne amidst carnage, which used to be the normal state of affairs in that country, not inaptly styled the Switzerland of Asia, whenever any one asserted his claim to its sovereignty. Dost Muhammad being successful, Shah Suja, the late sovereign, had to leave Afghanistan, and as a wanderer on the face of the earth, at last found an asylum at Ludhiana, living as a fugitive on the bounty of the East India Company.

Lieutenant Burnes, who had navigated the Indus and presented Ranjit Singh with the horses and the coach, received the permission of the Governor-General of India to travel into and explore Central Asia. He received his passports at Delhi, from whence he started on the 3rd of January, 1832. For his companions he had Dr. Gerard, who had made his name by his explorations in the Himalaya, Pandit Mohun Lal, a Kashmiri Brahmin, who was one of the first alumni of the Dehli College, and a Mahomedan surveyor named Mahomed Ali. Alexander Burnes safely accomplished his journey—traversed Afghanistan, where he was received with great hospitality by every man of rank and importance and especially by its ruler Dost Muhammad, when he passed through Kabul. After a year's sojourn in Central Asia, he returned in 1833, when he proceeded to England.

In England, he was lionised. He himself wrote in one of his letters to his mother,

"I am killed with honours and kindness and it is a more painful death than starvation among the Usheks."

He had an interview with King William the Fourth. He has himself recorded the conversation he had with his Majesty. He writes:

"His Majesty immediately began on my travels, and, desiring me to wheel round a table for him, he pulled his chair and sat down by mine. Hereon I pulled out a map, . . . . . I began, and got along most fluently. I told him of the difficulties in Sindh, the reception by Runjeet, &c., but William the Fourth was all for politics, so I talked of the designs of Russia, her treaties, intrigues, agencies, ambassadors, commerce, &c., the facilities, the obstacles regarding the advance of armies..."

The King then got up, (and said) :

"I trust in God that your life may be spared, that our Eastern Empire may benefit by the talents and abilities which you possess. You are entrusted with fearful information : you must take care what you publish. My ministers have been speaking of you to me, in particular Lord Grey. You will tell his Lordship and Mr. Grant all the conversation you have had with me, and you will tell them what I think upon the ambition of Russia..... Lord Grey thinks, as I do, that you have come home on a mission of primary importance—second only to the politics of Russia and Constantinople..... Lord Grey tells me that you have convinced him that our position in Russia is hopeless." (*Ibid.*, p. 27)

Here then was the genesis of the First Afghan War. The authorities wanted to interfere in the politics of Afghanistan on the ostensible pretext of Russia's advance towards India. Burnes returned to India and a few months' after his return, arrived Lord Auckland as Governor-General of India. Kaye writes that Auckland

"had met Burnes at Bowood, had been pleased with his conversation, and had formed a high opinion of the energy and ability of the young subaltern. When, therefore, the first rude scheme of a pacific policy in the countries beyond the Indus took shape in his mind, he recognised at once the fact that Burnes must be one of its chief agents. So the Cutch assistant [Burnes] was placed under the orders of the Supreme Government, and directed to hold himself in readiness to undertake what was described at the time, and is still known in history, as a 'commercial mission' to Caubul. Commerce, in the vocabulary of the East, is only another name for conquest.... and this commercial mission became the cloak of grave political designs."

So Burnes proceeded at the close of the year 1836 to Kabul at the head of the "commercial mission." Kaye does not hold Auckland so much responsible for this mission as his predecessor. He writes :

"Lord Auckland, it should be stated, received this as a legacy from Lord William Bentinck, with whom Burnes had been in communication in India, and in correspondence during his residence in England. Whilst at home, Burnes had ceaselessly impressed on the King's ministers as well as on the Directors of the Company, the importance of not neglecting, either in their commercial or their political aspects, the countries beyond the Indus : . . . . In one letter to Lord William Bentinck, he wrote that Lord Grey took a too European view of the question, and considered it chiefly 'in connexion with the designs of Russia towards Constantinople' ; whilst Lord Lansdowne, having 'a mind cast in so noble a mould, looked with more interest on the great future of human society than on our immediate relations with those countries'." Foot-note to page 34 of Vol. II of *Lives of Indian Officers*. (Edition of 1867).

Bentinck was restrained from declaring war on any state (except that of Kurg) because of the financial embarrassments in which the Company had been placed by the Burmese War. But he was no lover of peace, or friend of the non-Christian and coloured races of Asia. His councillors also took their cue from him, and so when the authorities from the King downwards in England were brought to book by Burnes on the Central Asian question from the same standpoint as himself, they found no difficulty to induce Auckland to do what suited their views best. Writes Kaye :

"Lord Auckland was not an ambitious man—quiet, sensible, inclined towards peace, he would not have given himself up to the allurements of a greater game if he had not been stimulated, past all hope of resistance, by evil advisers, who were continually pouring into his ears alarming stories of deep-laid plots and subtle intrigues emanating from the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, and of the widespread corruption that was to be wrought by the Russian gold."

The object of the "commercial mission" was to induce Dost Muhammad to throw in his lot with the English against Russia. The Mission entered Kabul on the 20th of September, 1837, and was, by orders of the Afghan sovereign, received with great pomp and splendour. But the object of the mission was not achieved. The English wanted to gain every possible advantage from the alliance with the Afghan ruler but not to concede to him anything in return. Dost Muhammad had been shorn of some of his

\* *Ibid.*, p. 33.

† *Ibid.*, p. 34.

most valuable eastern districts, especially the fertile valley of Peshawar, by Ranjit Singh. He asked the English as one of the conditions of the alliance that they would exert their best offices to have all those districts of which he had been dispossessed by the Sikh ruler to be restored to him. In this he was not asking too much. He saw before his eyes how the English had prevented Ranjit Singh from acquiring Sindh. The same considerations applied to his case also. But it was not the interest of the Christian Government of India to help the Afghan ruler in his demand. The Sindhian was a pusillanimous creature compared to the Afghan and the Sindh Government was not so strong as that of Kabul. It was very easy for the English to acquire Sindh at any time that suited their convenience. But it was not so with Afghanistan. A century had not yet rolled its course since the Afghan Kingdom had extended as far as the banks of the Jumna. Sindh Amirs as well as the Sikh Chiefs were the vassals of Afghanistan. Marquess Wellesley was always afraid of an invasion from that quarter. To weaken Afghanistan was the policy of that Governor-General. To achieve this end, he intrigued with the rulers of Persia, Sindh and the Panjab.

Although at the time of which we are speaking Afghanistan was not so strong as it had been during Marquess Wellesley's regime, yet it was not to be trifled with, or treated with contempt. So it was not the interest of the English to make Afghanistan a strong power. Moreover, they knew that on the death of Ranjit Singh, the Panjab would come into their hands and so eventually also the districts of Afghanistan which that Sikh sovereign had acquired from Dost Muhammad.

Under these circumstances it was not the policy then of the Christian Government of India to accede to the request of Dost Muhammad. They were intriguing and conspiring even to subvert Dost Muhammad's dynasty, because that Afghan was a capable sovereign and hence as a tall poppy he was an eyesore to them and deserved to be cut down. So it was not their interest to make the commercial mission a success.

To achieve their end they had a tool ready at hand whom they wanted to make use of as a puppet. The ex-King Shah Suja was a pensioner of the Company. They wanted to depose and dispose of Dost Muhammad and reinstall Shah Suja on the throne of Kabul. So while Burnes was trying his best to promote the British alliance with the Amir (writes Kaye) :

"Other counsels were prevailing at Simla—that great hot-bed of intrigue on the Himalayan hills—." \* They conceived the idea of re-instating the old deposed dynasty of Shah Soojah, and they picked him out of the dust of Loodhianah to make him a tool and a puppet, . . ."

Sir Henry Fane was at that time, the Commander-in-Chief in India. He did not approve of the policy of interference in the affairs of Afghanistan. In 1837, he wrote to Sir Charles Metcalfe :

"Every advance you might make beyond the Sutlej to the Westward, in my opinion, adds to your military weakness.....If you want your empire to expand, expand it over Oude or over Gwalior, and the remains of the Mahratta empire. Make yourselves complete sovereigns of all within your bounds. *But let alone the far West.*

\* *Ibid.*, p. 36.

(Kaye's Life of Lord Metcalfe, Vol. II, p. 306, quoted in Kaye's *War in Afghanistan*, 4th Edition, 1890, pp 359-360 f: n.)

But without a war Shah Suja could not be re-instated. So the Christian jingoes of Simla determined to go to war with Dost Muhammad.

This First Afghan War derives its importance, not so much from the numbers of battles fought, or the success attending one or the other contending party, as from the curious sidelight it throws on the national character of the English of those days and on the tortuous course of their diplomacy—certainly not of oriental diplomacy. In the first place, those who ever pinned or even now pin their faith on the genuineness of the Parliamentary books—whether blue or white—were undeceived by the manner in which those books are manufactured. The so-called honourable members of Parliament, whether nobles or commoners, did not consider it inconsistent with their fine sense of honour and honesty, to garble documents and deliberately misrepresent facts and publish lies to the world. The garbled version of the Burnes correspondence published in the parliamentary papers relating to the First Afghan War very clearly establishes what we have said above. In those papers Burnes was made to appear as favoring the war with Afghanistan. The deliberate lies contained in these papers would never have been known but for their exposure made by the father of Burnes. Great was the sensation caused in England by the exposure, which may be judged from the publications of those days.

As said above, in the parliamentary papers Burnes was made to appear as favoring the war, because Dost Muhammad was not friendly to the English. The reverse of this was the real fact. The passage reproduced below was deliberately suppressed and not published in the official correspondence. On the 30th December, 1837, Burnes wrote from Kabul to Mr. Macnaghten:

"The present position of the British Government at this capital appears to me a most gratifying proof of the estimation in which it is held by the Afghan nation. Russia has come forward with offers which are certainly substantial. Persia has been lavish in her promises, and Bokhara and other states have not been backward. Yet, in all that has passed or is daily transpiring, the *Chief of Caubul declares that he prefers the sympathy and friendly offices of the British to all these offers, however alluring they may seem, from Persia or from the Emperor*—which certainly places his good sense in a light more than prominent, and, in my humble judgment, proves that, by an earlier attention to these countries we might have escaped the whole of these intrigues, and held long since a stable influence in Caubul."

Similarly other passages which placed Dost Muhammad's conduct in a favorable light were deliberately omitted from the published correspondence. Thus when the Russian officer Captain Vickovich was alleged to have brought letters from the Czar to Dost Mahammad, seeking an alliance with him, the latter went to Burnes for counsel and guidance. Burnes reported the incident to the Supreme Government of India. But the passages in the correspondence which were favorable to Dost Muhammad were not printed.

Regarding the garbled manner in which the parliamentary papers regarding the first Afghan War were issued, Kaye writes with just indignation:

"I cannot, indeed, suppress the utterance of my abhorrence of this system of garbling the official

correspondence of public men—sending the letter of a statesman or diplomatist into the world mutilated, emasculated—the very pith and substance of them cut out by the unsparing hand of the state-anatomist. The dishonesty by which lie upon lie is palmed upon the world has not one redeeming feature. If public men are, without reprehension, to be permitted to lie in the face of nations—wilfully, elaborately, and maliciously to bear false witness against their neighbours, what hope is there for private veracity? In the case before us the *suppressio veri* is virtually the *assertio falsi*. The character of Dost Mahomed has been lied away, the character of Burnes has been lied away, both, by the mutilation of the correspondence of the latter, have been fearfully misrepresented—both have been set forth as doing what they did not, and omitting to do what they did. I care not, whose knife—whose hand did the work of mutilation. And, indeed, I do not know. I deal with principles, not with persons, and have no party ends to serve. The cause of truth must be upheld. Official documents are the sheet anchors of historians—the last courts of appeal to which the public resort. If these documents are tampered with, if they are made to misrepresent the words and actions of public men, the grave of truth is dug, and there is seldom a resurrection. It is not always that an afflicted parent is ready to step forward on behalf of an injured child, and to lay a memorial at the feet of his sovereign, exposing the cruelty by which an honourable man has been represented in state documents as doing that which was abhorrent to his nature. In most cases the lie goes down unassailed and often unsuspected, to posterity, and in place of sober history, we have a florid romance.”

The “commercial mission” was a failure. “Burnes asked for every thing, but promised nothing. He had no power to make any concessions.” So Burnes, with the commercial mission, left Kabul on the 26th of April, 1838 and in a few days’ time arrived at Simla.

The Russian agent was biding his time and after the departure of the English “commercial mission,” his influence was paramount in the court of the Afghan ruler. Kaye says:

“Burnes went, and Vickovich, who had risen greatly in favour, soon took his departure for Herat, promising everything that Dost Mahomed wanted—engaging to furnish money to the Barukzye chiefs, and undertaking to propitiate Runjeet Singh.”

The fiat had gone forth at Simla that war should be declared against Afghanistan, Dost Muhammad be deposed and Shah Suja be re-installed on the throne of Kabul.\*

\* Mr. Keene, in an appendix to his history of India, gives the genesis of the first Afghan War. He says that :

“By the courtesy of the India Office in allowing access to the despatches of the period—never before published, or only in an imperfect form—the whole facts of the case are now, for the first time, forthcoming.

In concluding the Appendix, he writes :

“From the papers it can only be concluded that the mind of Lord Auckland had been gradually influenced, until he became impressed with the necessity of substituting the Saduzai dynasty—the ‘Duranic Empire’ as it was called—for the Amirate of the Dost, led thereto by fear of Persia and Russia. But it appears almost equally certain that the British Ministry made that policy their own : not merely by adoption but by prior suggestion and subsequent encouragement, so that they would even have enjoined it on the Governor-General, if he had not originated it himself. Without seeing private correspondence, long since beyond reach, no more can be known, but Palmerston did much of his work, it is understood, by that channel, in India known as ‘semi-official’.

“Captain Burnes did not cease to press on the attention of Government the danger from Persia and Russia, and his desire for action was admirably seconded by letters he received from England.

So when Burnes reached Simla the conspirators in the summer capital of India prevailed upon him

"not to spoil the 'great game' by dissuading Lord Auckland from the aggressive policy to which he had reluctantly given his consent."<sup>\*</sup>

Burnes was not a strong-minded man. He yielded to the persuasive eloquence of that arch-conspirator, Macnaghten, a model Christian to boot, and a distinguished linguist, and J. R. Colvin, whose voice was paramount in the council of the Supreme Government.

The then Commander-in-Chief, named Sir Henry Fane, was not in favour of the invasion of Afghanistan. He very truly observed, "Every advance you might make beyond the Sutlej to the Westward adds to your military weakness."

But his advice, not being palatable to his colleagues, was not paid any attention to.

The war being decided upon, a proclamation was issued which was a tissue of falsehoods of the most audacious kind conceivable.

But before the issue of this proclamation a Treaty, what is known as the Tri-partite, was concluded between the East India Company on the one hand and Ranjit Singh and Shah Suja on the other. This Treaty is the most nefarious transaction that ever disgraced the diplomatic annals of any nation or country. By it the existence of the state of Sindh was doomed. Ranjit Singh was an unwilling party to this treaty, but perhaps he calculated upon securing some advantages for his principality from this diplomatic blunder on the part of the Anglo-Indian government of India.

From the military and strategical viewpoint also, this expedition to Afghanistan was a blunder. As a military genius, Ranjit Singh must have seen through it. He had a series of grievances against the British Government of India. He had been prevented from extending his influence over the country situated between the Sutlej and Jumna and more recently he saw how the Company's Government brought Sindh under their sphere of influence, forbidding him, as it were, to move in that quarter. All these things were rankling in his breast and he thought here was an opportunity for him to pay the British Government of India in their own coins and with simple and compound interest

I have a note in which is written. 'I send you a letter to read from the chairman of the Directors, who in truth wishes to *walk on*. I wish they would be moved who are nearer.' This letter from the chairman was certainly a singular one, for it announced no less than a determination to take the Punjab, Captain Burnes being promised the conduct of the expedition. Sir John Hobhouse, in his speech to the House of Commons on the 23rd June, 1842, states that 'a despatch to Lord Auckland at the end of October, 1838, instructed his lordship in council to pursue *very nearly* the same course, which, it afterwards appeared, he had adopted without knowing our opinions.' It appears, therefore, his lordship did not pursue *quite* the course recommended by Sir John Hobhouse and the Secret Committee, and it is not impossible the slight error was made of marching to Kabul instead of to Lahore—at least, such may be inferred from this letter of the chairman, who was one of the Secret Committee. This letter was sent by Captain Burnes to Lord Auckland through the private secretary, Mr. Colvin, and came back with the expression of his lordship's approval."

Mason's *Travels*, Vol. III, pp. 471-472.

\* Kaye's *Lives*, II. p. 86.

also. But, unfortunately, he died shortly after the conclusion of the Tri-partite Treaty to which he was a party.

It is unnecessary to mention in detail the movements of troops from various quarters—from the Bombay side, which navigating the Indus passed through Sindh and Baluchistan and also from Northern India, which passed through the Panjab and Khyber Pass, and their entrance into Afghanistan. It is equally unnecessary to name the various military officers who were in command of these troops.

But it is necessary to allude to the manner in which the Amirs of Sindh were treated by the British Government of India on the occasion of this expedition into Afghanistan. Without the consent of the Sindh Amirs of Hyderabad, the British troops forced their passage up the Indus and through their country, and when they resented the conduct of the Christian Government of India which was against all precedents of International Law and which no existing treaty with them allowed, they were threatened with extermination. *Nolens volens* they submitted.\*

"The Ameers were known to be weak, and they were believed to be wealthy. Their money was to be taken, their country to be occupied, their treaties to be set aside at the point of the bayonet, but amidst a shower of hypocritical expressions of friendship and good will."†

But the British Government were not content with forcing the passage of their troops through the territory of the Amirs, but contributions were also exacted from them. They were made to look upon themselves as vassals of Shah Suja—their King whom they were asked to support with money. A new treaty was forced upon them. Regarding this transaction it is recorded :

"Captain Eastwick seized the opportunity to administer the black dose of his mission to his hosts...The Amirs listened composedly...When the reading was over, the Biluchis showed great excitement. At this time a slight signal from their Highness would have been sufficient to terminate the lives of all our party under the swords of the barbarian and remorseless Biluchis...Mr. Nur Mohamed first observed, in Biluchi, to his two colleagues, 'Cursed be he who puts reliance upon the promises of the Feringees,' and then, addressing himself seriously to the British representative, he spoke thus in Persian, 'your treaties, I believe, are changeable at your pleasure and convenience, is this the way to treat your friends and benefactors? You asked our permission to allow your armies a free passage through our territories. We granted it without hesitation. Had we known that, after the entrance of your army into our lands, you would threaten our safety, and enforce another treaty upon us, demanding an annual tribute of three hundred thousand rupees and a ready payment of two million one hundred thousand rupees for the immediate expense of the army, we would, in such case, have adopted measures for the security of our country and persons...'

\* Kaye writes :—

"Injustice ever begets injustice. It was determined by the Simla Council that Shah Soojah and the Army of the Indus should be sent through the country of the Ameers. To accomplish this, it was necessary that, in the first instance, an existing treaty should be set aside. When the Ameers consented to open the navigation of the Indus, it was expressly stipulated that no military stores should be conveyed along the river. But as soon as ever Lord Auckland had resolved to erect a friendly power in Afghanistan and to march a British army across the Indus, it became necessary to tear this prohibitory treaty to shreds, and to trample down the scruples of the Ameers." *History of the War in Afghanistan*. Vol. I, p. 398.

† *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 401.

"Captain Eastwick heard all this with calmness, and gave brief replies in Persian and Arabic proverbs...Mr. Nur Mohamed smiled, and spoke to his cousins in Biluchi,...and then, with sigh, he said to Captain Eastwick, 'I wish I could comprehend the meaning of the word 'friend' which you use. We cannot give a decisive reply to your present demands at once',..."

Regarding the treatment meted out to the Amir of Khyrpur, a French author, J. P. Ferrier, says:

"When the British forces entered Sindh, the venerable chieftain (Mir Rustam of Khyrpoor) acceded to all the sacrifices imposed upon him. When asked by the English to *lend them during their operations in Afghanistan* the fortress of Bukkar, ... the demand appeared to him too humiliating. 'It is,' he said, 'at once the bulwark and the heart of my country, and my honor forbids that I should trust that in the hands of strangers.' Nevertheless, he allowed himself to be persuaded... He *lent* them the fortress of Bukkar—it has never been out of their hands since, and to recompense his generous conduct towards them they despoiled him five years afterwards of the rest of his territory, and possessed themselves also of that of his brothers and nephews. The officers of General Napier invaded even the harems of these unfortunate princes and carried off the treasures, jewels and even the clothes of their women."

Is it any wonder then that the Sindh Amirs were provoked to intrigue and conspire against the Government of India, against whom they had legitimate grievances?

The excesses committed by British officers on the line of march will be understood from the following recorded by an English author accompanying the British force. He narrates what followed upon the capture of a number of wild Baluchis in the act of carrying off some of the camels of the expeditionary force:

"Every day was now destined to have its catastrophe; ten Beloochees had been summarily executed on this ground by Colonel Sandwith of the First Regiment of Native Cavalry, under written orders from Sir John Keane, as his Excellency passed with the Bengal Column. The first order was a verbal one, but Colonel Sandwith, not liking it, required a written one, and received it on half a sheet of note-paper. He has had the wisdom to preserve it. The poor wretches had their elbows secured, and were made to sit on the ground, when each had a bullet sent through his brain from a carbine. Lieutenant Lock, the officer who superintended the execution, spoke very feelingly of what he had been no willing agent in. Some of them, he said, sat quietly down and submitted to their fate: some resisted, and, to keep them quiet, the execution party fastened their heads together by their long luxuriant hair, which served to secure them for their destruction. Two young lads seemed horrified to bewilderment by their fears, and implored for mercy, seizing the feet and knees of the superintending officer, but they were made to sit down. Ere the fatal volley exploded, they were endeavouring to embrace, leaning their heads against each other, weeping bitterly their last farewell."†

The troops led by British officers entered Afghanistan and, like Caesar, they could have exclaimed that they went, they saw and they conquered. The *ostensible* object with which the Government of India had proclaimed the war, was now gained. Shah Suja was re-installed on the throne of his ancestors and he was a mere puppet in the hands of his allies.

Dost Muhammad was made a prisoner and sent to India

The objects for which the war in Afghanistan had been undertaken, were now accom-

\* *Autobiography of Lutfullah*, pp. 294—296.

† *Narrative of the Campaign of the Army of the Indus in Sindh and Kabul in 1838-39*. By P. H. Kennedy, 2 vols. London, 1840, Vol. II, p. 228.



plished, and had the British been honest and sincere in their declarations, they should have immediately cleared out of Afghanistan. It was difficult for the Afghans to understand the British policy.

Writes Mohan Lal\* :

"We neither took the reins of Government in our own hands, nor did we give them in full powers into the hands of the Shah. Inwardly or secretly we interfered in all transactions, contrary to the terms of our own engagement with the Shah, and outwardly we wore the mask of neutrality. In this manner we gave annoyance to the king, on the one hand, and disappointment to the people on the other."

"Whatever we might boast of our diplomatic success during the campaign of Afghanistan, we were certainly very wrong in not keeping up our adherence, even for a short time, to those engagements and promises which we had so solemnly and faithfully made to the various chiefs, on return for their taking up our cause and abandoning their long known and established masters. Our letters, pledging our honour and Government to reward and appreciate their services for our good, were in their hands, and as soon as we found that the chiefs of Candahar were fled, and there was no necessity for wearing longer the airy garb of political civilities and promises, we commenced to fail in fulfilling them. There are, in fact, such numerous instances of violating our engagements and deceiving the people in our political proceedings, within what I am acquainted with, that it would be hard to assemble them in one series."†

The "game" which the British were playing in Afghanistan was of the same nature as they had successfully played in India, ever since the battle of Plassey. The position of Dost Muhammad was that of Shiraj-ud-dowla, and of Shah Suja that of Mir Jafar. Just as the British held the military occupation of Bengal, so their stay in Afghanistan was of the nature of a military occupation. Sir William Macnaghten, the ambassador or the chief of the Political Staff in Afghanistan, had his prototype in Clive. In fact, that model British Civilian was copying that arch-forger Clive in his dealings with the people of Afghanistan.

In India it is very easy to play off caste against caste, and creed against creed. Hence the administration of India can be carried on without much difficulty on the doctrine of *divide et impera*. But it was somewhat difficult to act upon it in Afghanistan, because the Afghans after all had no system of caste, and they were votaries of one creed. Yet Macnaghten and his assistants left no stone unturned to act on the doctrine of *divide et impera* and other maxims of Machiavellian policy in their dealings with the people of Afghanistan. In Mohan Lal they found a tool ready at hand to give effect to their nefarious scheme. Kaye writes :

"The Moonshee (Mohun Lal) seems to have been endowed with a genius for traitor-making, the lustre of which remained undimmed to the very end of the War."§

"This Mohun Lal had other work entrusted to him.....He was not directed merely to appeal to the cupidity of the chiefs, by offering them large sums of money to exert their influence in our favour. He was directed, also, to offer rewards for the heads of the principal insurgents. As early as the 5th of November [1841], Lieutenant John Conolly, who was in attendance upon Shah Soojah in the Balla Hissar, wrote thus to Mohun Lal :

\* Life of Dost Mahamadad Khan, I, p. 313.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 208-209.

§ *History of War Afghanistan*, p. 459 of Vol. I, fourth Edition of 1890.

"Tell the Kuzzilbash chiefs, Shereen Khan, Naib Sheriff, in fact, all the chiefs of Sheeah persuasion, to join against the rebels. You can promise one lakh of rupees to Khan Shereen on the condition of his killing and seizing the rebels and arming all the Sheeahs, and immediately attacking all rebels. This is the time for the Sheeahs to do good service. Tell the chiefs who are well disposed, to send respectable agents to the Envoy. Try and spread 'nifak' among the rebels. In everything that you do consult me, and write very often."

"And in a postscript to this letter appeared the ominous words, I promise 10,000 rupees for the head of each of the principal rebel chiefs."†

"But the Moonshee, perplexed by doubts rather than burdened with scruples, did not see very clearly at first how the chiefs were to be taken off; so he wrote to the envoy that 'he could not find out by Lieutenant Conolly's notes how the rebels are to be assassinated, but the men now employed promise to go into their houses and cut off their heads when they may be without attendants.'

"The victims said to have been first marked for the assassin's knife were Abdoolah Khan and Meer Musjedjee."§

The policy which they were acting upon was not so much "oriental" but "occidental" in its nature.

The scandalous conduct of the politicals and other officers of the British race should also be referred to here. It will be well to express their conduct in the words of one of their own compatriots, the renowned historian of the War in Afghanistan.

"The temptations which are most difficult to withstand, were not withstood by our English officers. The attractions of the women of Caubul they did not know how to resist. The Afghans are very jealous of the honour of their women, and there were things done in Caubul which covered them with shame and roused them to revenge. The inmate of the Mahomedan Zenana was not unwilling to visit the quarters of the Christian stranger. For two long years, now, had this shame been burning itself into the hearts of the Caubulees, and there were some men of note and influence among them who knew themselves to be thus wronged. Complaints were made, but they were made in vain. The scandal was open, undisguised, notorious. Redress was not to be obtained. The evil was not in course of suppression. It went on till it became intolerable and the injured then began to see that the only remedy was in their own hands. It is enough to state broadly the painful fact."\*\*

The natives of Afghanistan saw their harems invaded, their women ravished, their country plundered, and everything which they held sacred, desecrated.

\* It was against this policy that Sir Alexander Burnes wrote :

"*Divide et impera* is a temporising creed at any time, and if the Afghans are united, we and they bid defiance to Persia, and instead of distant relations we have everything under our eye, and a steadily progressing influence all along the Indus."

The above sentences are from a long letter of Burnes written from Husan Abdal on 2nd June 1838 before the Christian invasion of Afghanistan and addressed to Macnaghten. He rightly observed in the same letter, that "the noble Marquis (Wellesley), in his splendid administration, made the Afghans feel our weight through Persia, and arrested the evil. We should have had none of the present vexations, if we had dealt with the Afghans direct. We then counteracted them through Persia, we now wish to do it through the Sikhs. . ."

Page 242, Parliamentary Papers of 1859 (East India, Cabul and Afghanistan.)

† *Ibid.*, p. 202.

§ *Ibid.*, pp. 218—219.

\*\* *Ibid.*, pp. 143—144.

The sight which met their eyes day after day was enough to make their blood boil with indignation at the conduct of the British. It was much more than the flesh and blood of any man, especially of the proud Afghan, could put up with. Long centuries of subjection have made Indians peace-loving creatures. But the haughty Highlanders of Afghanistan, whose necks never chafed under any foreign yoke, could not tolerate the misdeeds and high-handed proceedings of the English any longer in their country. They had formed a very low opinion of the English. They found them to be wanting in all sense of honour, honesty and morality.

So the Afghans, who had suffered long and patiently, seeing that the English did not fulfil all the promises which they had made, revolted against them and determined to clear their country of their hated presence. The puppet whom the English had set up was an object of great abhorrence to them. Shah Suja, according to their mode of thinking (and it must be admitted that it was the right one too), was the cause of all their troubles and miseries. He should be removed from their country. So the throne of Kabul, restored to Shah Suja, through the aid of the English, was not a bed of roses to him. No, the restored throne cost him his life. The poor fellow, when he made up his mind to bid adieu to his native land for ever and return once more to the place of refuge he had found in the Company's territory, and when he was on his way thither, was shot like a dog by one of his infuriated countrymen.

Another man whom the inhabitants of Afghanistan hated most bitterly was Sir Alexander Burnes. They looked upon him as a mean and despicable wretch, who, after having sojourned in their country and been treated with most lavish hospitality, betrayed them and brought on all the calamities from which they were suffering. He appeared to them to have been a spy. International Law allows spies to be given the shortest shrift. So Burnes deserved a traitor's death. And this was what actually befell him. He was murdered in broad daylight by the infuriated mob of Kabul.

Macnaghten could not play with safety the role of Clive in Afghanistan or the English just what they had done in Bengal some eighty years previously. Afghanistan was made too hot for them, and as prudence is the best part of valour, they considered their safety lay in retreat from that country. So they promised to restore Dost Muhammad to the throne of Afghanistan. A treaty to that effect was made with Dost Muhammad's son Akbar Khan. The behaviour of the English was anything but honest and straightforward in their dealings with the Afghans. Especially their envoy, Macnaghten, had become infamous from his brutal and inhuman conduct, and the nation to which he belonged could not be safely trusted by the Afghans. So the latter demanded hostages of the English as a guarantee that they would fulfil their promise, by clearing out and restoring Dost Muhammad as ruler of Afghanistan.

But Macnaghten was not honest in his professions and the proposals which he made to Akbar Khan. He meant treachery. Kaye, as an apologist of his compatriot Macnaghten, writes :

"It is not easy to group into one lucid and intelligible whole all the many shifting schemes and devices which distracted the last days of the envoy's career. It is probable that at this time he

could have given no very clear account of the game which he was playing. ....His mind was by this time unhinged—his intellect was clouded, his moral perceptions were deadened....'

But his treacherous conduct cost Macnaghten his life. Macnaghten had a conference with Akbar Khan in which he was shot dead by that Afghan chief. Of course, English historians have accused Akbar Khan of treachery. But Syed Feda Husain, a recent Muhammadan writer, after consulting the contemporary records of that period, has recorded his opinion that treacherous conduct should not be attributed to Akbar Khan but to the Envoy. In a review of his work, entitled "Nairang-i-Afghanistan," in *The Modern Review* for February 1907, p. 224, we read:

"Macnaghten wrote to Akbar Khan assuring him of his friendship and asking for an interview and concluded his letter by warning Akbar Khan against some of his sirdars and advising him to get himself rid of them. He at the same time wrote to these very sirdars inciting them against Akbar Khan. Akbar on receiving this letter called a council of his sirdars and showed it to them. Then the sirdars, too, brought forward their letters and the 'diplomacy' of Macnaghten was exposed. Akbar Khan kept quiet for the time being and arranged the interview as described by Macnaghten. When Macnaghten went to meet Akbar Khan, he ordered a portion of his troops to lie in ambush, instructing their commander to rush forward at a given signal. When the interview took place, Akbar Khan began to reproach Macnaghten for his treachery and asked him to explain the meaning of those letters, written to himself and his sirdars. When Macnaghten was trying to explain his conduct, an Afghan came running to Akbar Khan and, speaking in Pashtu, informed him of the movement of English troops, which had been deputed to lie in ambush. On this both Akbar Khan and Macnaghten stood up and an altercation ensued. The first shot was fired by Macnaghten and he was killed by Akbar Khan. Now, if these facts are correct, small blame attaches to Akbar Khan for killing Macnaghten. And incidents such as these go a long way to explain the distrust and hatred with which the Afghans regard the 'Feringhees.'"

Thus then perished Shah Suja, Burnes and Macnaghten—the triumvirate who were the principal actors in the drama of Afghan politics. The British force which occupied Afghanistan was now compelled to retire from that country.

The retreat began in the depth of winter and after the British had been sufficiently humiliated by having to keep in the custody of the Afghan authorities some of their officers with their wives as hostages. But the retreat proved more disastrous to the English than any field of battle. All those men, women, children and followers who sallied out of Kabul on their way back to India, except in one solitary instance, either perished on the road or were made captive by the Afghans. That solitary instance was] of that Dr. Brydon, who arrived at Jelalabad and reported his belief that he was the sole survivor of an army of some sixteen thousand men.

Such then was the story of the first attempt made for the establishment of the British supremacy in Kabul and its failure with great humiliation. The First Afghan War was not only a blunder but a crime and a sin. "The wages of sin is death." It proved more than death to the British. Their prestige was gone and the reputation of their being ever successful in military strategy or Machiavellian diplomacy was blasted as if for ever. Kaye in concluding his chapter on the retreat from Kabul writes:

"It would be unprofitable to enter into an inquiry regarding all the minute details of misdirection and mismanagement, making up the great sum of human folly, which was the permitted means of our overthrow. In the pages of a heathen writer over such a story as this would be cast the shadow of a tremendous Nemesis. The Christian historian uses other words, but the same prevailing idea runs, like a great river, through his narrative, and the reader recognises one great truth, that the wisdom of our statesmen is but foolishness, and the might of our armies is but weakness, when the curse of God is sitting heavily upon an unholy cause. 'For the Lord God of recompenses shall surely requite'."

The procedure of the British to retrieve their reputation for military skill, and the means adopted to rescue the prisoners of their creed and race from the hands of the Afghans and the manner in which they wreaked their vengeance on the Moslem Highlanders, belong properly to the regime of another Governor-General and not that of Lord Auckland. So we close here the first part of the narrative of the Afghan War.

## CHAPTER LXXII

### LORD ELLENBOROUGH'S ADMINISTRATION (1842-1844)

Lord Auckland's administration, especially the war in Afghanistan ending in disasters unparalleled in the history of Anglo-Indian government, as well as the critical situation of the Indian finances, made him very unpopular with almost every section of people in England and India. The muddle and confusion in which the Afghan and Indian affairs were thrown required a man at the helm of the supreme local government in India who was well acquainted with Indian politics and not a mere novice in Indian statecraft. The authorities at home thought that they had such a man in Lord Ellenborough. His lordship had three times held the office of President of the Board of Control, East India Company, a situation which corresponds to that of the Secretary of State for India in modern times.\* He had also taken part in the debate in Parliament on the occasion of the renewal of the East India Company's charter in 1833.

The War in Afghanistan was a very unpopular one. The authorities wanted to terminate it and withdraw the British forces from that country with as good grace as possible. Lord Ellenborough had always denounced that war in terms of severe censure. On September 15, 1841, he wrote to Her Majesty the Queen Victoria as follows :

"It appeared that the political and military charges now incurred beyond the Indus amounted to 1,250,000£ a year ; that the estimate of the expense of the additions made to the army in India since April 1838, was 1,138,750£ a year ; and that the deficit of Indian revenue in 1839-40 having been 2,425,625£, a further deficit of 1,987,000£ was expected in 1840-41.

"Your Majesty must be too well informed of the many evils consequent upon financial embarrassment and entertains too deep a natural affection for all your subjects, not to desire that in whatever advice your Majesty's confidential servants may tender to your Majesty with respect to the policy to be observed in Afghanistan, they should have especial regard to the effect which the protracted continuance of military operations in that country, still more any extension of them to a new and distant field, would have upon the finances of India, and thus upon the welfare of eighty millions of people who acknowledge your Majesty's rule."

So the choice of the authorities naturally fell on him and he was accordingly appointed Governor-General of India to succeed Auckland. His policy in governing India was foreshadowed in his speeches, especially that of July 5, 1833, delivered from his place in the House of Lords. On that occasion, his lordship is reported to have said :

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\* In his speech before departing for India, at the dinner given in his honour by the Court of Directors of the Honourable East India Company, November 3, 1841, Lord Ellenborough said :

"Sir, it is one of the advantages I derive from having three times held the office of President of the Board of Control, first through the confidence of my noble friend [the Duke of Wellington] and since twice through the confidence of my right honourable friend Sir Robert Peel, that I proceed to India with some knowledge, and therefore, with no ungenerous distrust, of those I am appointing."

## LORD ELLENBOROUGH'S ADMINISTRATION

"No man in his senses would propose to place the political and military power in India in the hands of the natives, .....

"Our very existence in India depended upon the exclusion of the natives from military and political power in that country. We were there in a situation not of our own seeking, in a situation from which we could not recede without producing bloodshed from one end of India to the other. We had won the Empire of India by the sword, and must preserve it by the same means, doing at the same time everything that was consistent with our existence there for the good of the people."

Yes, Ellenborough was an ardent advocate of holding India by the sword. So when he was appointed Governor-General, he turned for advice to the two brothers, the Marquess Wellesley and the Duke of Wellington.†

The parts which these two brothers played in the closing years of the eighteenth and the first few years of the nineteenth centuries in robbing millions of Indians of their independence and firmly imposing the yoke of the rule of England on their necks, are such well known facts of British Indian history that they need not be dilated upon here. Ellenborough's guides, friends and philosophers were then the two brothers named above. He tried to emulate their examples and follow in their footsteps.

But the diplomatists of the Christian countries of the West know how to cover their ulterior designs. Lord Ellenborough was no exception to that rule. He very loudly proclaimed that as Governor-General of India he would govern that country upon peace principles and do everything in his power to direct the due cultivation of the arts of peace. At the dinner given in his honour by the Court of Directors of the Honourable East India Company, November 3, 1841, before departing for India, Ellenborough said :

"To terminate the war with China by a peace honourable to the Crown and desirable in its provisions to establish tranquillity on both banks of the Indus—in a word *to restore peace to Asia*, and with peace, that sense of entire security, without which peace itself is almost valueless, from

\* Hansard, Vol. XIX, third series, page 191.

† In his speech before departing for India, at the dinner given in his honour by the Court of Directors of the Honourable East India Company, Nov. 3, 1841, he said:

"If there be anything, however, which gives to me advantages over other men in the prosecution of that sole object of a good Government, the conferring of benefits upon the people, it is that, placed thirteen years ago at the head of the India Board by the noble duke near me [the Duke of Wellington], I have, from that time to the present, communicated confidentially with him upon all great questions relating to India, and I have endeavoured to make myself acquainted with the general views and principles according to which he thought those questions should be decided.....It is my greatest satisfaction—it is my highest pride, that I proceed to take upon myself the government of India in the possession of his confidence. It is the best support that Government could receive."

Ellenborough was always for war and not peace. Lord Colchester, who edited his letters and correspondence, wrote in the *Nineteenth Century* for August, 1899 (p. 238):

"It is quite true that Lord Ellenborough's ambition was to be a military statesman. A boy during the earlier part of the great war with Napoleon, approaching manhood at the commencement of the Peninsular struggle, he had originally desired to enter on a military career, and when at the wish of his father he gave up such aspirations for Parliamentary and political life, he desired to influence military as well as civil affairs by the power of speech, which, as he said, was the great instrument of an English statesman."





country for your consideration. I am most anxious to have your opinion as to the general principles at least upon which a campaign against that country should be conducted.

"Lieutenant Durand will likewise make a memorandum upon the frontier country of Nepal, and recall to your recollection the circumstances of the war with that state."

Again, he commenced his letter of 26th October to the Duke of Wellington as follows :

"I trust that the necessity will not arise while I am in India of making war either on the Punjab or on Nepal, but I wished, before I left England, to have your general opinion as to the plan upon which any such war, if necessary, should be conducted, in the same manner in which I obtained many years ago, for the future use of the Government of India, your opinion as to the plan upon which any new war with the Burmese should be conducted. . . . .

"What I desired, therefore, was your opinion, founded, as far as it could be, upon the imperfect geographical information which can be given to you as to the best mode of attacking the Punjab. The Sikh Army is generally collected about Lahore. They have, however, a force of 8,000 or 10,000 men, very mutinous and lately coerced by Afghans, in and about Peshawar."

The views expressed in the above letters of 15th and 26th October, 1841, when compared with his speech of 3rd November, 1841, extracts from which have already been given above, would lead one without any difficulty to conclude that Ellenborough was a very apt pupil of Talleyrand, according to whom language has been given unto us to conceal and not to express our thoughts.

Ellenborough arrived in Calcutta on the 28th February, 1842 and immediately assumed the office of the Governor-General of India. He prepared a Memorandum on the position of India, dated March 18, 1842, for the information of Her Majesty the Queen Victoria. Regarding the Afghan War, he wrote:

"The division of the [British] army which is at Candahar is incapable of making any extensive movement, either in advance or retreat by the almost total want of camels and other animals."

"At Peshawar there is a Sikh army, hostile to the Afghans, but hostile to the British troops, too,...

"The events which have recently occurred in Afghanistan render the termination of the war with China an object of the greatest importance and of the most pressing nature."

Ellenborough left Calcutta for the Upper Provinces to be near the frontier. By April, 1842, the British forces under Major-General Pollock had retrieved some of the lost ground in Afghanistan, had forced their passage through the Khyber Pass and were in possession of Ali Masjid.

The British protegee, Shah Suja was murdered on the 5th April, 1842. So Ellenborough thought it prudent to withdraw altogether from Afghanistan and leave the Afghans to manage their own affairs. In his letter from Benares, dated 21st April, 1842, he wrote to the Queen :

"Your Majesty's troops being redeemed from the state of peril in which they have so long been placed by their scattered positions, their imperfect equipment, and their distance from their communications with India, it will become a subject for serious consideration whether they shall again advance upon Afghanistan by a new and central line of operation, or whether it will not be more advisable, our military reputation having been re-established, to terminate in conjunction with the Sikh Government, those operations in pursuance of the Tripartite Treaty to which that Government was a party."

Again, on May 16, 1842, he wrote from Allahabad to the Queen that

"The Shah was murdered at Cabul on the 5th of April. Under present circumstances, considering the divided state of Afghanistan, it has been deemed prudent to abstain from recognising any succession."

He was desirous of seizing this opportunity to put an end to the Tripartite Treaty, which came into existence in the regime of his predecessor Lord Auckland. Of course, he never thought that such a measure would be a gross breach of faith. He wrote to the Queen from Allahabad on June 7, 1842 :

"It has appeared that the present state of things in which there exists in Afghanistan no constituted authority capable of executing the Tripartite Treaty, is the most favourable for the declaration by the Governments of India and of Lahore that that treaty is at an end..."

With the nations of Europe, although they are worshippers of Christ, who taught his followers "to love those that hate you, to bless those that curse you" and also to turn the left cheek to those who smite you on the right, revenge is sweet. So to avenge the murder of Sir W. Macnaghten, Ellenborough meditated treachery. He wrote to the Queen Victoria on the 17th August, 1842, that,

"He has deemed it proper to instruct Major-General Pollock, in the event of Mahomed Akbar Khan's coming into his hands without any previous condition for the preservation of his life, to subject that chief to trial and, if he should be convicted, to punishment for murder of Sir W. Macnaghten in the same manner in which the Major-General would deal with any other person accused and convicted of murder under similar circumstances."

Again on Oct. 5, 1842, he wrote to the Queen :

"Lord Ellenborough has authorised the offering of a reward for that chief's (Akbar Khan's) delivery to the British army. He is to be considered only as the murderer of a British minister, not as a general at the head of a national force."

It can be easily guessed how Akbar Khan would have been dealt with, had he fallen into the hands of the British, who were thirsting for his blood.

With the successes achieved by General Pollock over the Afghans at Ali Masjid Ellenborough was willing to exchange prisoners of war and withdraw altogether from Afghanistan. Such seem to have been his instructions to General Pollock. But that officer went beyond his instructions. Writing to the Duke of Wellington on June 7, 1842, he said :

"A greater difficulty exists in the influence of the political agents, the men anxious for revenge, and the others naturally clinging to the hope of relieving the prisoners. All these, since his arrival at Jelalabad, have got round Major-General Pollock ; have led him to misunderstand the plainest instructions, to miscalculate the value of objects, and to act upon the passion of others, not upon his own reason."

The Iron Duke was much enraged with the conduct of General Pollock. In reply to the above letter he wrote to Ellenborough, on August 6, 1842 :

"But it is astonishing that General Pollock should not have obeyed your instructions in respect to the exchange of prisoners. If an exchange had been effected, you might have withdrawn the troops, at any time, and nobody could have whispered a camp hint."

But Pollock disobeyed the orders of Ellenborough and marched on to Kabul, where, to show the spirit of Christian charity, he ordered his troops to commit

excesses. Referring to this conduct of Pollock, the Duke of Wellington wrote to Ellenborough on February 4, 1843 :

"I am much more uneasy about the thanks to General Pollock than I am about those to yourself. I cannot understand how a man who knows what soldiers are made of, could think of giving an order for the destruction of the bazar and two mosques at Cabul, and not be sensible that such destruction must and would be followed by the pillage and destruction of the town itself, and that if he thought proper to do the former, he did not put himself at the head of half the army and see the destruction effected, and to take care to protect the town from the pillage and destruction which it was certain must be the consequence by the other half of the army."

Although the British troops were victorious, it was impossible for them to remain long in Afghanistan without those scenes being re-enacted which led to the murder of Macnaghten and Burnes. So the British, flushed with victory, did not dictate any terms to the Afghans, did not ask for the surrender of the persons of the murderers of their Envoy and chief Political, or of those who violated the honor of their women. Prudence was considered the best part of valor, and so they made haste to withdraw from Afghanistan and set unconditionally the ex-Amir Dost Muhammad at liberty. Ellenborough, in his letter dated 15th November, 1842, wrote to the Queen :

"Your Majesty will likewise find annexed to this memorandum the general order whereby it was made known that, the British prisoners having been recovered from the Afghans, all the Afghan prisoners would be set at liberty, including Dost Mahomed and his family, as soon as the armies had crossed the Indus."

"Lord Ellenborough trusts that your Majesty will approve of this act, at once of policy and of clemency. . . . Dost Mahomed may recover his former authority, but he has suffered severely, and his whole object will be to maintain himself in Cabul. He may give trouble to the Sikhs at Jellalabad, but they think they can make arrangements with him which will lead to their quiet occupation of that place, and it is with their entire concurrence that Dost Mahomed is released."

Ellenborough considered a demonstration necessary. He wrote to the Duke of Wellington from Allahabad on May 17, 1842 :

"At Hyderabad and in Scinde, as well as at Nepaul and in the Saugor district and in Bundelcund, I see the indication of the change with respect to our power, which the disasters at Cabul have created in all men's opinions, and this makes me more anxious to get back the army from Afghanistan. I have made the most of the victory of Jellalabad. I have issued general orders a little in the French style, but they have their effect, I have given honours and rewards with a large hand, and my old colleague, Sir W. Casement, tells me that the general order I enclose is worth 10,000 men. I do all I can to gratify the officers and soldiers, and I really think I may depend upon the most zealous support of the whole army."

In the eleventh century, Mahmud Ghaznavi, in one of his invasions of India, removed the gates of the Temple at Somnath as a booty to his native place. Mahmud was a barbarian and as his country was devoid of any works of art, the carving and decorative art exhibited on the gates, in short their beauty, captivated the fancy of that iconoclast, and after their removal to his native place, it is said that they were made to serve as gates to his mausoleum. As a trophy of their triumphs in Afghanistan, the British troops brought these gates with them to India. To make a demonstration,

the gates were carried in regular procession from Afghanistan through the Panjab and it was proposed to restore them to the temple at Somnath to which they originally belonged. But the gates did not proceed any further than Agra.

There was a deep policy in carrying the gates in regular procession throughout Hindustan. Ellenborough was anxious to conciliate the Hindus.\* He believed that it was altogether impossible to reconcile the Muhammadans to the British rule. For nearly a thousand years there has not been much love lost between the votaries of the Cross and the Crescent. The Christians even to this day have not given up their spirit of crusades against the followers of Islam. And Ellenborough as a Christian could not conceal his antipathy towards Moslems. Writing to the Duke from Simla, on October 4, 1842, Ellenborough said :

"I could not have credited the extent to which the Mahomedans desired our failure in Afghanistan, unless I had heard here circumstances which prove that the feeling pervaded even those entirely dependent upon us. Here there is a great preponderance of Mahomedans. I am told that the guns produced absolute consternation visible in their countenances. One Ayah threw herself upon the ground in an agony of despair. The Commander-in-Chief observed it amongst his own servants. I fired forty-two guns for Ghuzni and Cabul, the twenty-second gun—which announced that all was finished—was what overcame the Mahomedans. The Hindoos, on the other hand, are delighted. It seems to me most unwise, when we are sure of the hostility of one-tenth, not to secure the enthusiastic support of the nine-tenths, which are faithful,.....I would make the most of our successes and of the recovery of the gates of the temple, treating it ostensibly as a great military triumph, but knowing very well that the Hindoos will value it as the guarantee of the future security of themselves and their religion against Mussalmans. All those who best know India tell me that the effect will be very great indeed, and I think it will."

Again, writing to the Duke on January 18, 1843, Ellenborough said :

"I have every reason to think that the restoration of the gates of the Temple of Somnath has conciliated and gratified the great mass of the Hindoo population. I have no reason to suppose that it has offended the Mussalmans; but I cannot close my eyes to the belief that that race is fundamentally hostile to us, and therefore our true policy is to conciliate the Hindoos, . . ."

All the fuss regarding the gates of Somnath was a stroke of policy, for it was considered expedient to conciliate the Hindus. Now, it is a fact that those gates were not the gates of Somnath. Perhaps Ellenborough knew as much. Therefore all the

\* Ellenborough wrote to the Queen in October, 1842:

"The gates of the Temple of Somnath have been brought away by Major-General Nott. These gates were taken to Ghuzni by Sultan Mahmood, in the year 1024. The tradition of the invasion of India by Sultan Mahmood in that year, and of the carrying away of the gates, after the destruction of the temple, is still current in every part of India, and known to every one. So earnest is the desire of the Hindoos, and of all who are not Mussulmans, to recover the gates of the temple, that when, ten or twelve years ago, Runjeet Singh was making arrangements with Shah Shoojah for assisting him in the endeavour to recover his throne, he wished to make a stipulation that when Shah Shoojah recovered his power he should restore the gates to India, and Shah Shoojah refused.

"Lord Ellenborough transmits for your Majesty's information a copy of the address he intends to publish on announcing that the gates of the temple will be restored.

"The progress of the gates from Ferozepore to Somnath will be one great national triumph, and their restoration to India will endear the Government to the whole people."

grand procession with which the so-called gates of Somnath were paraded throughout Hindustan was got up for the sake of political expediency.\*

But Christians of the orthodox type in England were enraged with the conduct of Ellenborough for the reverence he showed to the gates of a heathen temple. In the British Parliament as well as outside it, he was severely criticised for his conduct. On the ninth of March, 1843, Mr. Vernon Smith, Member for Northampton, made the following motion :

"That this House, having regard to the high and important functions of the Governor-General of India, the mixed character of the native population, and the recent measures of the Court of Directors for discontinuing any seeming sanction to idolatry in India, is of opinion that the conduct of Lord Ellenborough in issuing the General Orders of the sixteenth of November, 1842 and in addressing the letter of the same date to all the chiefs, princes, and people of India, respecting the restoration of the gates of a temple to Somnath, is unwise, indecorous and reprehensible."

The motion was rejected by 242 votes to 157. Lord (then Mr.) Macaulay delivered a speech condemning Ellenborough in no measured terms. He said that

"The charge against Lord Ellenborough is that he has insulted the religion of his own country and the religion of millions of the Queen's Asiatic subjects in order to pay honor to an idol, . . . The Mahometans are a minority, but their importance is much more than proportioned to their number : for they are an united, a zealous, an ambitious, a warlike class. . . . Nobody who knows anything of the Mahometans of India can doubt that this affront to their faith will excite their fiercest indignation. Their susceptibility on such points is extreme. Some of the most serious disasters that have ever befallen us in India have been caused by that susceptibility."

Ellenborough justified his conduct on the ground of political expediency. Writing to the Duke on March 22, 1843, he said :

"I do not care what may be said about Somnath gates. The measure was a politic measure for India—and I ought only to look to India. If I were to abstain from doing anything here which could be disapproved by gentlemen over their firesides in England, I should lose India. You know better than any one the difficulties I found on my arrival. *I have only been able to meet those difficulties by acts and language which, even in India, I should not myself have adopted under ordinary circumstances.*"

The words put in italics indicate the Machiavellian policy he pursued in the administration of India.

The First Afghan War ended. It cannot be said that it reflected any credit either on the military or the civil service of India. Neither the general in the field nor the statesman in the cabinet, could be congratulated on the part he played in this nefarious transaction. The occidental diplomatist, saturated with the principles of Machiavelli and hence not playing a straightforward game, was stewed in his own juice as it were. But the Christian Government of India spent money like water, because that money did not come out of the pocket of any Christian native of England but of the 'heathen'

\* Ellenborough's hatred of the followers of the creed of the Crescent may be perhaps accounted for by his wife deserting him and living with an Arab Chief, named Shaykh Mijiwal El Mezrab of Damascus, whom Lady Burton refers to as "Lady Ellenborough's Bedawin husband" (*The Life of Sir Richard Burton*, Vol I, p. 180).

The "franko-phobia" of the Marquess of Wellesley also was explainable on a similar ground.

natives of India. They were generous with other people's purse. And their apparent success was due to this lavish expenditure in Afghanistan and to the bribing of the Afghans. The First Afghan War was not only a blunder and a crime but a positive sin.

The British expeditions against the Musalmans of Afghanistan miserably failed. Their prestige was lowered and their military reputation was shattered. To show that they could beat somebody, the Christians very unjustly made war on another Muhammadan Power, *viz.*, the Amirs of Sindh.

Before the British expedition started for Afghanistan, the then Commander-in-Chief Sir Henry Fane had expressed his opinion that it was not desirable for his co-religionists and compatriots to move west of the Sutlej. In 1837, he had written to Sir Charles (afterwards Lord) Metcalfe :

"Every advance you might make beyond the Sutlej to the Westward, in my opinion adds to your military weakness.....If you want your empire to expand, expand it over Oude or over Gwalior, and the remains of the Maratha empire. Make yourselves complete sovereigns of all within your bounds. *But let alone the Far West.* (*Life of Lord Metcalfe*, Vol. II, p. 306.)\*

Auckland's successors, Ellenborough, Hardinge and Dalhousie acted on this advice of Sir Henry Fane which accounts for their annexations of the Punjab, Sindh, Nagpur, Oudh and several other principalities by fraud and force.

\* Kaye's *History of War in Afghanistan*, Vol. I, pp. 859 and 860, 4th Edition, 1890.

## CHAPTER LXXIII

### THE ANNEXATION OF SINDH

The British ought to have been grateful to the Amirs of Sindh for the help they rendered them in the Afghan War. But it has been truly observed that there is no gratitude in politics.

Every act of the Sindh drama shows scenes of enormity and foul play on the part of the British actors. According to the treaty of August 22, 1809, between the British Government and Sindh, it was stipulated that—

"Art. 1. There shall be eternal friendship between the British Government and that of Sindh, . . . . .

"2. Enmity shall never appear between the two states.

"3. The mutual despatch of the Vakeels of both Governments, namely, the British Government and Sindhian Government shall continue.

"4. The Government of Sindh will not allow the establishment of the tribe of the French in Sindh."

But the British violated the spirit of the treaty and coveted the land of the Moslem rulers of Sindh when under the euphemistic phrase, "Navigation of the Indus," they surveyed that river without the consent of the Amirs. It is recorded by Sir James Mackintosh in his journal dated February 9, 1812, that,

"A Hindoo merchant, named Derryana, under the mask of friendship, had been continually alarming the Sind Government against the English mission. On being reproved, he said that, although some of his reports respecting their immediate designs might not be quite correct, yet this tribe never began as friends without ending as enemies, by seizing the country which they entered with the most amicable professions."

"A shrewd dog," said Mackintosh.

So when Burnes ascended the Indus, a Syad on the water's edge lifted up his hands, and exclaimed,

"Sind is now gone, since the English have seen the river, which is the road to its conquest."

The English meant to annihilate the independent existence of Sindh when they concluded that Tripartite Treaty with Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Shah Sujah. Kaye writes:

"that unhappy tripartite treaty between Shah Soojah, Runjeet Singh and the British Government—the source, Heaven only knows, of how much injustice and how much suffering,—was entered into in a most evil hour. From that hour of the 26th day of June 1838 the Ameers may date their ruin. From that hour they virtually ceased to exist as independent rulers. The fourth article of the treaty ran in these words: 'Regarding Shikarpore and the territory of Sindh lying on the right bank of the Indus, the Shah will agree to abide by what may be settled as right and proper, in conformity with the happy relations of friendship subsisting between the British Government and the—Ameers of Sindh?—no,—the Maharaja.' The Ameers of Sindh were from this time forth to be treated as mere non-entities—weaklings to be turned to the best possible account.

"The Ameers of Sind were not parties to the treaty, but because the British Government entered into a treaty with Runjeet Singh and Shah Soojah, the operation of a previous treaty with the Ameers of Sindh 'must necessarily be suspended.' And this is British faith !

"It is well for the strong to accuse the weak of subterfuges and evasions—to charge meanness and dishonesty upon the party who were driven to these straits, but is it, we ask, less perfidious to violate treaties as a bully than to violate them as a sneak? ..... The British were the first to perpetrate a breach of good faith. They taught the Ameers of Sindh that treaties were to be regarded, only so long as it was convenient to regard them. What wonder that these instructions 'returned to plague the inventor?' . . .

"The wolf in the fable did not show greater cleverness in the discovery of a pretext for devouring the lamb than the British Government has shown in all its dealings with the Ameers." \*

In the *Autobiography of Lutfullah*, edited by E. B. Eastwick, F. R. S., F. S. A. (3rd edition, London, Smith, Elder and Co., 1858), it is stated that

"In January 1839, a new treaty was forced on the Amirs of Sind. Captain Eastwick read it to their Highnesses in Persian. "The Amirs listened composedly, though marks of displeasure could be traced on the face of Mir Nur Mahamed. He changed color, becoming now red, now pale as a ghost. When the reading was over, the Biluchis showed great excitement. At this time a slight signal from their Highnesses would have been sufficient to terminate the lives of all our party under the swords of the barbarian and remorseless Biluchis, many of whom stood at our head with naked scimitars, in the same way as the executioners do at the moment of the performance of their horrid duty. Mir Nur Mahamed first observed, in Biluchi, to his two colleagues, "Cursed be he who puts reliance upon the promises of the Feringees;" and then, addressing himself seriously to the British representative, he spoke thus in Persian: "Your treaties, I believe, are changeable at your pleasure and convenience, is this the way to treat your friends and benefactors? You asked our permission to allow your armies a free passage through our territories. We granted it without hesitation, depending upon your friendship under your honourable promises. Had we known that, after the entrance of your army into our lands, you would threaten our safety, and enforce another treaty upon us, demanding an annual tribute of three hundred thousand rupees, and a ready payment of two million one hundred thousand rupees for the immediate expenses of the army, we would, in such case, have adopted measures for the security of our country and persons. You know we are Biluchis, and no traders to be frightened easily. We do not govern the country alone, but the interest of the whole of our clan is involved in the government." Captain Eastwick said, "Necessity has no law;" "Friends must aid friends in emergencies." Mir Nur Mahamed smiled, and then with a sigh, he said to Captain Eastwick, "I wish I could comprehend the meaning of the word 'friend' which you use," †

But it was reserved for Ellenborough to annex Sindh, violating all the recognised laws of nations. The reasons which marked out Sindh as the victim of the English may be summed up as follows :

1st. The Amirs of Sindh were reputed to be very wealthy and their treasures overflowing with gold, silver, and other precious metals and stones, that is, what is called in the Bible "filthy lucre." The greedy Christians could not resist the temptation of possessing them and they knew they could be masters of all these good things of the world very easily and without much bloodshed. Writes Sir Charles Dilke in his *Greater Britain* :

"It is in India, when listening to a mess-table conversation on the subject of looting that we begin to remember our descent from Scandinavian sea-king robbers. Centuries of education have not

\* *The Calcutta Review*, Vol. I, pp. 220—225

† Pp. 277, 278, 279.



purified the blood, our men in India can hardly set eyes on a native prince or a Hindoo palace before they cry, 'What a place to break up!' 'What a fellow to loot'!

2nd. The possession of Sindh would help the English in their military operations on the North-Western frontier, as their troops could be easily transported by the river Indus. This would also be beneficial to their trade and commerce in that region. Writing to the Duke of Wellington from Allahabad on June 7, 1842, Ellenborough said:

"Such I wish to make our position on our North-Western frontier. I have written for more information than I have as to the island of Bukkur and the town of Sukkur. That town of Sukkur must be our *tele-du-pont* upon the right bank of the Indus and the island a citadel. I have asked the Court to send me six more steamers for the Indus. I have ordered round to the Indus the two in the Euphrates, and there are now, I think, two, if not three, with from seven to ten iron steamers. I can command the river from its mouth to Ferozepur. I do not intend to give up Kurachee. Thus I shall be able to throw troops from Bombay upon the right bank of the Indus, and Kurachee being our port, I hope the day will come when our iron steamers from that place will take officers arriving from Aden and Suez up at once to the Sutlej."

3rd. In Indian politics, the English, whenever they wished to swallow up any principality or deprive any people of their independence, had their bogey to start with, that is, they feared Russian or French intrigue in India. With the battle of Waterloo, one should have thought that no one in his senses would have believed that the French any more contemplated establishing an empire in India. Yet the Duke of Wellington, who seems to have advised Ellenborough to annex Sindh, gave as the principal reason for such a step that the French might be intriguing at the mouth of the Indus! For to Ellenborough he wrote on February 4, 1843:

"I am very anxious about the mouth of the Indus. I don't like and I am very jealous of the proceedings of the French Government in all parts of the world. If their object was to promote their own objects and the commercial and the political interests of France, I should not so much mind them, notwithstanding that even these objects require and deserve our attention. But what I see of them is everywhere, in every spot in which a French agent could be introduced or even a subject of France, if only in the shape of a missionary, to intrigue, and excite the community against the interests and influence of the British Government. \* \* \*

"There is no part of the East in which they could intrigue with more advantage, and occasion more excitement against the British Government, than among the tribes on the Lower Indus, and between the mouth of the Indus and the Persian Gulf. You may rely upon it that you will ere long have a French frigate in that quarter, whose operations, it will be the duty of the admiral to observe afloat, while your agents in Sind, Beluchistan, Kelat, etc., will observe them in shore."

The arguments on which the Iron Duke based the above premises are ludicrous, to say the least. For he wrote:

"The French Government have always had connections with the Sikhs. An Italian officer who was heretofore in the service of Buonaparte, and has since been in the service of Runjeet Singh, but had returned to Europe, has within the last three months taken leave of Louis Phillipe previous to his return to Lahore.

"His course should be observed. The religion, the social state, and the politics of the Sikhs render them by far the most appropriate allies for the French of any in that part of Asia, and if once they could establish themselves on the Indus, you would have them allied with the Sikhs, their officers in the Sikh army, the politics of Lahore under their direction."

In the above also was thrown out not a gentle but a broad hint for depriving the Sikhs of their independence.

The Iron Duke was dishonest in all that he wrote in the letter to Ellenborough, extracts from which have been given above. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, that military genius and ambitious prince whom the English styled the Lion of the Panjab, was now dead, and in his life-time he was prevented from gaining a footing in any part of Sindh. So to talk of the Sikhs intriguing with the French at the mouth of the Indus was not true.

The Duke of Wellington also gave strategical reasons for the occupation of Sindh. In his letter of March 30, 1842, he wrote to Ellenborough :

"Hyderabad ought to be maintained, and such other parts in Scinde, particularly on the left bank of the Indus, as will tend to secure that possession. The Government of Bombay ought, besides, at all times, to have gun boats and others propelled by steam in that river, so as to command its navigation and to prevent the passage of freebooters from the right to the left bank. The security of Scinde, which will be promoted by the possession of the passage by the island of Bukkur, will tend to give further security to the left flank of the army on the Sutlej, which might be considered to be in a position not to be attacked by any force which could be brought against it from Central Asia."

4th. One of the reasons for war with the Amirs of Sindh and annexing that province was the defeats which the British had sustained in Afghanistan and the disasters that had befallen them in that country. To quote Kaye :

"But the real cause of this chastisement of the Ameers consisted in the chastisement which the British had received from the Afghans. It was deemed expedient at this stage of the great political journey, to show that the British could beat some one, and so it was determined to beat the Ameers of Sindh. It is true that two victorious armies had marched upon Cabool through the Eastern and Western countries of Afghanistan and carried everything before them, but it was deemed expedient immediately to withdraw those armies and the scurrying home through the passes might look, or by many be conceived to look, like a virtual acknowledgment of inability to occupy the country, and therefore, in some measure, an acknowledgment of defeat. To remedy this evil it was determined to show that the British army could hold Sindh. A few more victories were required to re-establish our reputation and the Governor-General resolved, that the Ameers, who a few months before had spared our army when they might have annihilated it, should be the victims of this generous policy."\*

Wellington concluded his letter of March 30, 1842, the letter in which his advice that "Hyderabad ought to be maintained," etc.—has already been quoted above. by saying :

"And I earnestly recommend to you to adopt measures which will give to your Government the advantage of appearing to be and of being in readiness to maintain the British Government and power in India. These, with the other measures recommended in this letter, will all tend to the same object, that of relieving your government from the consequences of the impression produced by the recent disasters north of the Indus.

"Your position is an unfortunate one, and it is painful to consider of it. But I think that I have suggested to you the measures best calculated to restore our strength, to secure our position, to acquire the confidence of our subjects, our dependents, and our allies, and particularly of our

army, by the re-establishment of its discipline and subordination, the restoration of its military spirit and confidence.

"If you should succeed in these measures, you will save the British nation from the ruin and disgrace of the loss of this great empire, and you will acquire throughout the world the reputation and respect which you deserve.

"It is impossible to impress upon you too strongly the notion of the importance of the restoration of our reputation in the East. Our enemies—in France, the United States, and wherever found—are now rejoicing in triumph upon our disasters and degradation. You will teach them that their triumph is premature.

Reading the whole of the above letter of the Iron Duke between the lines, it is evident that he wanted Ellenborough to make war on somebody to show to the world that the British troops had not been cowed down by their disasters in Afghanistan. It is also clear that he threw out a broad hint that Sindh should be attacked, because it would succumb very easily to the British arms.

5th. Perhaps the most important consideration which led Ellenborough to annex Sindh was that its rulers were Musalmans. His Christian lordship's expressed antipathy and hatred towards the followers of Islam has already been mentioned before. To weaken the power of the votaries of Islam, to make them feel their inferiority to the Christians, was the avowed policy of the authorities. It was, therefore, that it was considered expedient to annex Sindh and make the Amirs prisoners and pensioners of the East India Company.

But some pretext or pretexts were needed to swallow up the principality of Sindh. It was soon discovered that the Amirs violated treaties, and that they entertained hostile intentions against the English! For these alleged faults, they were deprived of their principality and sent into captivity; the inmates of their harems insulted, assaulted and brutally robbed of their ornaments; and their hoarded treasures plundered.

That the pretexts were false, no one knew better than Ellenborough himself. Writing to the Iron Duke from Agra on March 22, 1843, he said:

"I hardly know how I could have accomplished the object of retaining possession of a commanding position upon the Lower Indus without a breach with the Amirs. We could hardly have justified our remaining at Kurachee, we could not have justified our remaining at Bukkur, after the termination of the war in Afghanistan, without a new treaty. What had occurred was sufficient to show that upon our retiring from the Indus, the existing treaty for the free navigation of that river would have been violated in every particular.....

"It was really impossible for me to form a decided opinion as to the authenticity of Persian letters—that could be much better decided on the spot, and being satisfied that, if the letters were genuine, we were justified in requiring new terms, and that policy required us to avail ourselves of the opportunity of coming to a new settlement if we were justified in doing so, I left the matter in Sir Charles Napier's hands."

After the above blunt and brusque confession of Ellenborough, it is needless to inquire into the alleged violation of treaties on the part of the Amirs, or of their treasonable correspondence with the King of Persia, or the hostile intentions against the British which have been attributed to them. The alleged misdemeanours and violation of treaties of the Amirs were thoroughly exposed in the controversy regarding

Sindh which took place in England, both in the Parliament and the press of that country, as pure fabrications. The reader interested in the subject is recommended to peruse the following publications named in the footnote\* to convince him of the utter falsity of the pretexts which, according to the Christian jingoes, justified the war on the Amirs of Sind.

Wrote Kaye in the first volume of the *Calcutta Review* (p. 219) regarding the violation of treaties by the Amirs:

"It would seem as though the British Government claimed to itself the exclusive right of breaking through engagements. If the violation of existing covenants ever involved *ipso facto* a loss of territory, the British Government in the East would not now possess a rood of land between the Burhampooter and the Indus."

The chosen instrument for the spoliation of Sindh was one Sir Charles Napier, who, like Ellenborough, was a protegee of the Iron Duke. Why, of all mortals, Napier was chosen, is a puzzle difficult to solve. This man was known to possess a very violent temper, to be of insubordinate disposition and very quarrelsome. Yet this was the man regarding whom Ellenborough wrote to Wellington on 17th November, 1842,

"I am quite charmed with Sir Charles Napier."

Napier was chosen because he was ready to execute the dirty job with which he was entrusted.

It should be remembered that Napier was sent to Sindh to supersede Major Outram, who had been the British Envoy in the Court of the Amirs during the period of the Afghan War. He rendered important services to his Government during that critical period—services which were pronounced by Mountstuart Elphinstone to have been such as "it would be difficult to parallel in the whole course of Indian diplomacy."

There must have been some strong reasons which led to his supersession by Napier. Official documents do not throw any light on this point. But we suspect that the character which Outram was credited with possessing as being a straight-forward and honest man, and not an occidental diplomat, made Ellenborough shrink from communicating to him the nature of the dirty work which he had in contemplation. As he could not reasonably expect Outram to be a tool of his Machiavellian policy, Ellenborough was compelled to supersede him. Napier was in the confidence of Ellenborough. The precise nature of his instructions with which the Governor-General used to favour him is not known, because the correspondence between them was not of a public but of a private character. His Lordship writing to Wellington on March 22, 1843, said:

\* 1. Correspondence relative to Sindh 1838-1843. Presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of her Majesty, London, 1843.

2. Correspondence relative to Sindh [Supplementary to above] 1844.

3. Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, vol. 72. No. 8. London. 1844.

4. The Conquest of Sindh, a Commentary, Parts I and II, by Lieut. Col. J. Outram, C. B. 1846.

5. Eastwick's Dry Leaves from Young Egypt.

6. The *Calcutta Review*, vol. VI. The Sindh Controversy, Napier and Outram.

"My correspondence with Sir C. Napier having been more of a private than a public character, although all made official, I may have been less careful in the choice of expression than I should have been had I written in the name of the Secretary."

It is not improbable that only such of the correspondence was made official as suited the convenience of the Government of the day.

From all that we have said, it is perhaps not unreasonable to infer that Ellenborough instructed Napier to provoke the Amirs to hostilities. That perhaps accounts for the attitude he assumed towards them and the studied manner in which he ill-treated and ill-used them.

Napier and his Christian colleagues and underlings indulged in all sorts of intrigues and conspiracies to subvert the authority of the Amirs and achieve their vile end. They succeeded in raising a traitor in the camp of the Amirs in the person of Ali Murad, the Amir of Khairpur and a near relation of the other Amirs of Sindh.

It would be too long and tedious to narrate all the political and military transactions of Napier which were admirably calculated to provoke hostilities. And in the end, they succeeded. The Moslem Amirs were compelled to fight the Christians for their very existence. But they were no match for Napier in all those arts which go under the designation of occidental diplomacy. There were traitors in their camp who were in the pay of the British. So it was not difficult for Napier to be triumphant in the battle of Miani fought with the Amirs on the 17th February, 1843. It is recorded by Sir Richard Burton that

"Neither of our authorities tell us, nor can we expect a public document to do so, how the mulatto who had charge of the Amirs' guns had been persuaded to fire high, and how the Talpoor traitor who commanded the cavalry, openly drew off his men and showed the shameless example of flight. When the day shall come to publish details concerning disbursement of 'secret service money in India,' the public will learn strange things. Meanwhile those of us who have lived long enough to see how history is written, can regard it as but little better than a poor romance.""

After the battle the victorious European soldiers behaved in a manner of which any human being ought to feel ashamed. The privacy of the Zenana was violated and the inmates of the Amir's harem were cruelly treated and robbed of their valuable ornaments. A French writer has recorded:

"The officers of General Napier invaded even the harems of these unfortunate princesses and carried off the treasures, jewels and even the clothes of their women."†

\* *Life of Sir Richard Burton* by Lady Burton. London, Chapman and Hall, Ltd. 1893. p. 141.

† *History of the Afghans*, by J. P. Ferrier, translated by Captain Jesse, London. John Murray (1858 : p. 287.)

A writer signing himself as "a traveller" wrote in the *Tribune* of Lahore in September, 1893, a letter on "the Conquest of Sind" from which the following extracts are made:

"A story I heard from Captain S—referred to the cruelties practised on the inmates of the Amir's Zenana after Napier's victory. Wives of Sergeants and other European soldiers were sent into the Zenana, and these Christian women delighted in most brutally tearing away rings from the noses and ears of the Zenana ladies. The harem ladies were not only plundered of their ornaments they had on their person, but their noses and ears were horribly mutilated. Of course, in histories written by Englishmen, to glorify the deeds of their countrymen, these things are never mentioned, but these barbarities throw those of the Native Sepoys during the Mutiny into the shade. Whatever

Sindh was annexed to the British dominions and Sir Charles Napier was amply rewarded for what he himself described as "a very advantageous, useful, humane piece of *rascality*," for, as he said, "we have no right to seize Scinde, yet we shall do so."

Of course, the Christian philanthropists of England affected to be shocked at the inhuman manner in which the Moslem Amirs were treated by their co-religionists and compatriots in India. They shed very copiously crocodile tears over the fate of the fallen Amirs. But perhaps they were all secretly glad that Sindh had become a part of the British dominions, because it added to the dominion over which the sun never sets, where their "boys" would be provided for and which would be a market for the goods manufactured by the nation of shopkeepers.

Another important consideration for the annexation of Sindh was that it grew fine cotton—a fact which the Britishers in India had found out even so long ago.

the native sepoy did, they did in the excitement of the hour. Whereas on the helpless, innocent Zenana inmates of the Amir, the cruelties were perpetrated in cold blood by Christian folks when all the excitement of the battle was over. There are many an unwritten chapter in the history of India for the last 250 years. If all the feats of strategists and diplomatists be brought to light, what a curious story they would tell of the mightiness and strength of the conquerors' sword.

"Captain S—served in India during the Mutiny. He is a linguist and a traveller known throughout the scientific world. His father was a military officer who took part in the Sind Campaign. So his authority there will be very few to challenge.

"The conquest of Sind is not very old. There are men living in whose memory the events of that memorable conquest are still fresh. It is a pity that our educated countrymen do not try to collect the historical materials they have still within their reach. In my sojourn through Sind, nothing struck me so much as the wandering minstrels and their ballads. Some of these men are very old. I met one who was bordering upon eighty. These ballads are chiefly historical, and are principally composed in Baluchi. I suggest to the educated youth of Sind to collect the ballads, as they will throw a flood of light on the past history of their province."

In his "Dry Leaves from Young Egypt," Eastwick has given a detailed account of the manner in which the Zenana ladies of the Amirs were treated by Christian British officers.

At p. 323 of *Lights and Shadows of Military Life*, edited by Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Sindh wrote:

"Our object in conquering India, the object of all our cruelties, was money. More than a thousand millions sterling are said to have been squeezed out of India in the last sixty years. Every shilling of this has been picked out of blood, wiped and put into the murderers' pockets: but wipe and wash the money as you will, the damned spot will not out."

But then the gallant writer did not anticipate the cruelties he had to inflict on the helpless inmates of the Amirs' harem in the "Christian" conquest of Sindh.

Sir Charles Napier was greatly proud of his being born a Christian. In his proclamation of the 6th August, 1844, as Governor of Sindh, he said:

"Be it known to all the Mahomedan inhabitants of Scinde, that I am the conqueror of Scinde, but I do not intend to interfere with your religion. I respect your religion, but it is necessary that you should also respect mine. We both worship *one* God," &c.

In the truly "Christian" spirit, Sir Charles Napier wrote to the fallen non-Christian Amirs on March 18, 1843:

"You must recollect that your intrigues with Meer Sher Mahomed give me a great deal to do. I am also much surprised by the falsehoods which you tell . . . if you give me any more trouble . . . I will cast you in prison as you deserve. You are prisoners and though I will not kill you, . . . I will put you in irons on board a ship. You must learn, Princes, that if prisoners conspire against those who have conquered them, they will find themselves in danger." P. 49. Supplementary Sind Parliamentary Papers, 1844.

## CHAPTER LXXIV

### ELLENBOROUGH'S TREATMENT OF THE SINDHIA

Sindh and Sindhia have no affinity with each other, although the names sound alike. But Ellenborough tried to treat both of them alike. The territory ruled by the house of Sindhia was always eagerly coveted by the British rulers of India. That principality was the richest and strongest of all the Mahratta States which went to form the Mahratta Confederacy. Under the guiding influence of its celebrated chief Mahadji, it had acquired almost the supreme power in India, for that chief held the Mughal Emperor of Delhi his captive. The most sanguinary battles fought by the English on the Indian soil in the early part of the nineteenth century were with the army of Mahadji's successor, Dowlat Rao Sindhia. Again, it was to coerce that chief that Marquess Hastings ostensibly undertook the war against the Pindaris.

How Lord Bentinck intrigued to annex the State of Sindhia, in order to connect Agra with Bombay has already been mentioned before. An intrigue of the same nature with a similar object in view was again indulged in by Ellenborough.

It should be remembered that the ruler of the State of Sindhia was not till 1843, like other native princes of India, a mere feudatory of the East India Company. He was considered to be a more or less independent sovereign. Thus in the report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1832 (on Political or Foreign), it was stated :

"Within the Peninsula, *Scindia* is the only Prince who preserves the semblance of independence." (P. iv.)

Before that Committee on the 16th February, 1832, the historian, James Mill said, regarding Sindhia, that

"He neither at present has subsidiary alliance with us, nor do we include him among the protected states, in that respect he stands alone, . . ."

Before the same Committee on the 27th February, 1832, Major Close in reply to the question,

"What is the relation in which Scindia stood to the Company?"—said :—"He was independent."

Then he was asked, "Has he no treaty with the Company?"—"Yes, there are several treaties, but they are not such as to abrogate his independence, or to place him in acknowledged submission to the British Government."

This fact is important to remember, because it shows that the Government of India had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of that State.

Unfortunately for that State, a few months after the arrival of Ellenborough in India as its Governor-General, its ruler Jankoji Sindhia breathed his last on the 7th February, 1843, and all of a sudden. About that time the Machiavellian policy of that Governor-General in Sindh was bearing its desired fruit, for that province was short-

after annexed to the British dominions. Ellenborough determined to follow the same policy and with the same object in view with the House of Sindhia.

Jankoji died childless and had made no arrangement for the succession. Here was an opportunity for the lynx-eyed British to seize and turn it to their advantage. Jankoji's widow was a girl of only eleven. So, the duty of selecting a successor to Jankoji fell on the Gwalior Darbar. The chiefs of that State elected a near relation of their departed sovereign in the person of a boy of eight years named Bhagirath Rao as the successor. This boy on being adopted assumed the name of Jiajirao Sindhia. The widow of Jankoji, although appointed regent, being herself a minor, the real power of governing the State fell into the hands of the Darbar. If government in the Western countries is a success, because it is vested in the representative Assemblies or Parliaments, it was no less so in those native States of India which were governed by Darbars. And the Gwalior Darbar was governing and would have governed the State well, had it not been interfered with by the Government of India.

Ellenborough cherished ulterior designs on this State. So from his camp at Delhi, he wrote to Queen Victoria on 19th February, 1843, that

"having received intelligence on the 9th instant of the death of the Maharajah of Gwalior, he immediately determined on proceeding to Agra, instead of Meerut, in order to be near Gwalior, where the Maharajah having died without heirs and the widow to whom the right of adopting a son belongs being only eleven, it could not but be a subject of anxiety in what manner the government would be carried on, and the necessity might possibly arise for instant intervention.

"Hitherto everything has been conducted at Gwalior peaceably and properly. The boy, about eight years old, nearest in blood to the late Maharaja, has been adopted, with the consent of the chiefs and army, and every deference which could be justly expected has been evinced towards the British Government."

There was nothing then to complain of against the conduct of the Gwalior Darbar. Why did the Governor-General write then that "the necessity might possibly arise for instant intervention?" His words indicated more than what appeared on the surface. This is evident from what follows in the letter above referred to. Ellenborough continued :

"Still the necessity exists for appointing a regency, and for some time there must be a difficulty in carrying on any new administration. Lord Ellenborough, therefore, adheres to his intention of proceeding to Agra, and has made some change in the disposition of the regiments in order to have with him old corps upon which he can entirely depend . . ."

Accordingly, Ellenborough proceeded to Agra and commenced his campaign of intrigues against the Gwalior State. John Hope, in his sketch of the House of Sindhia, writes :

"As Ellenborough had firmly resolved, though his resolution was not then made known, first to disregard the rights of this state, and afterwards deprive it of its independence, the preliminary step would necessarily be to set aside the Maharanee on the ground of her infancy, and to put up in her place as Regent a person who would cheerfully do the bidding of the British Government. The election was in the hands of the Durbar. Now there was only one individual in that council who would lend himself to carry out an anti-national policy, and he was called the Mamasahib.

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To the Duke of Wellington he wrote at the same time :  
 "I decided on going to Gwalior instead of Meerut as soon as I heard of the Maharaja's death,



Accordingly the Resident laid aside the principle of non-intervention which hitherto had guided his conduct, and strained every nerve to effect this man's election." \*

Hope in his work has given a graphic sketch of the nature and character of this Mama Sahib, who was an upstart and whose manners were repulsive. Yet Ellenborough did not scruple to write to Her Majesty the Queen Victoria in his letter dated Agra, 21st March, 1843, the following lie:

"The movement of Lord Ellenborough to Agra immediately on his receiving the news of the death of Sindhia has apparently had the desired effect of establishing without contest a strong government at Gwalior in the person of Mama Sahib, who feels that the support which has been given to him by the British representative has practically given to him the regency."

Hope writes:

"The opposition candidate who, if there had been no interference, would have been elected by acclamation was the Dada Khasjeewalla. Just at this critical time arrived a letter from his Lordship which conveyed these words: 'The Governor-General would gladly see the Regency conferred upon the Mama Sahib'."

So the Mama Sahib was "elected" the Regent of Gwalior. But he did not command the respect of anybody in that State. Yet his Lordship had the audacity to write to Her Majesty on April 20, 1843, that—

"The administration of the new regent at Gwalior has been carried on with tranquillity."

But this creature of the Governor-General did not long enjoy the sweets of office or the favor of that British autocrat. He had to leave Gwalior. Ellenborough in his letter of 8th June, 1843, informed the Queen:

"Until the 20th of May everything at Gwalior wore a favourable appearance, and the authority of the regent never appeared to have a stronger foundation than the day before the intrigue commenced, which has ended in his downfall. The regent had effected a marriage between his niece (a child of six years of age) and the Maharajah, who is nine. The marriage seemed to have been agreeable to the widow of the late Maharajah, the Maharanee—who is herself only twelve—but probably it was represented to her Highness that the regent, having managed this marriage, would, in the name of the minor Maharajah, supersede her authority in the State. Whatever the cause, her Highness gave her whole support to the faction hostile to the regent and advanced sums for the payment of the troops from the Treasury. After discussions which lasted a fortnight, the regent was dismissed, all the chiefs having been brought over to the faction hostile to him.

"The British Minister at Gwalior has advised the regent to retire from that place in obedience to the Maharanee's orders.

"These events are very much to be deplored. They may have very injurious results upon the tranquillity of the common frontier of the British territory and that of the Gwalior State. Lord Ellenborough still hopes, however, that no outrage will occur which will render necessary the bringing together of troops for the vindication of the honour of the British Government."

Let us turn to Hope for what he has to say regarding the ejection of Mama Sahib from Gwalior. He writes:

"There happened to be, at this time, a little disturbance in a distant part of the country between and I adhere to my purpose, although I do not now apprehend that there will be any difficulty about putting things into order there. The circumstance of my being so near will steady any new government of which I may approve."

a party of villagers and some sepoy, and the Resident called on the Mama to cause the apprehension of the native officer who was in command of the men, but, unluckily, power to act was just the one thing which the Regent most wanted. He was helpless, and the temper of the Resident was chafed. What was, then, to be done? The latter addressed himself to Lord Ellenborough and suggested the calling in of British troops from Agra. The answer seemed to make 'confusion worse confounded.' 'I intrust the use of troops to the discretion of no one except my own.' The pear was clearly not ripe, and nothing was done.

"And now another and an awkward embarrassment appeared, which seemed to set the very teeth of the Regent, as if he were in perfect terror. A slave girl whose name was Narungee, who had never been permitted to go outside the walls of the Zenana, had erected, it was gravely said, the standard of revolt in the palace . . . . . We, then residing on the spot, could never believe that she was anything better than the ordinary slaves, but if we are to give credence to the affrighted Mama, she must have been a Gorgon in disguise . . . . . for she deposed the nominee of the great Autocrat of India, packing him out of the country with all his baggage, without even the common Asiatic ceremony of the beat of a tom-tom. . . . .

"We confess, indeed, that we are inclined to regard the ejection of the Mama Sahib as a very great blunder, as it gave a fresh motive to Lord Ellenborough to mature some other scheme, which . . . . . proved 'far more certain to cause the collapse of the independence of this State than the worst acts of a wretched imbecile could possibly bring about. We believe, in fact, that if Lord Ellenborough did not actually rejoice over the expulsion of his nominee, . . . . . still perceiving that from him nothing great could be derived, the only umbrage which he felt, perhaps, was the apparent contempt done to his dignity, which the overthrow of his favourite would seem to display.'"

The vacancy caused by the flight of the Mama Sahib was to be filled. The Darbar proceeded to elect its chief and the choice unanimously fell on the Dada Khasjeeewalla. But this man was not invested by the Governor-General with the powers of the Regent which the Mama Sahib possessed. Writes Hope :

"It was on the 24th of May, 1843, that the Mama took flight, and on the 26th, the Maharanee, who now occupied the throne as Regent, ordered the Durbar to assemble to elect a Minister. This national council made choice at once of the Dada Khasjeeewalla. Vacillation of purpose was one of the remarkable traits in the character of the Governor-General, and an instance of it was to be given now. He who had refused to recognise the Maharanee in February on account of her tender years, hesitated not to acknowledge her as Regent in May, but no power under heaven would have prevailed on him to countenance as Minister, the ill-fated chamberlain. A wit once said, that "Women's faults are 'wo—Nothing's right they say, nothing' right they do.' It was so with this man. The same number of faults, though in their character different, had all the native Chiefs in India, whenever their respective territories chanced to be coveted. They had, it was alleged, in stereotyped letter-press, a weak system of government on the frontier, and a strong system of government in the interior...

"It is a matter," writes the Governor-General, "of paramount importance that there should exist in Gwalior a government willing and able to preserve tranquillity along that extended line (meaning the frontier), for the British Government cannot permit the growing up of a lax system of rule, generating habits of plunder along its frontier.' When this is written in despatches, the evidence of approaching danger is strong and undissembled, but what will the reader think when we tell him that the province of Bundelkhand, which was under our control, and the two rich provinces of Saugor and Nerbudda, which were absolutely British territory (the frontiers of which bordered on the frontiers of Scindea's dominions), were at this time, and had been for two years, in a state of open insurrection, and that on the very day that this threatening despatch was penned by Lord

Ellenborough, Scindia's contingent of 2,000 men were keeping our rebels from destroying the wealthy town of Khimlassa, which was distant 100 miles from the Gwalior Capital, and which belonged to the British Government, whilst the most active and able officer of the Maharanee's army, Colonel Salvadore, with his men, was saving from destruction Balabehut, another town of ours, which the rebels were about to fire."<sup>\*</sup>

The next act in this Gwalior drama was the removal of the Resident from that State by the Governor-General. Colonel Spiers, who was the Resident at this time at Gwalior, was perhaps not a man after Ellenborough's heart. So the Governor-General adopted diplomacy, certainly not oriental, but occidental, in removing him from Gwalior. Writing to the Queen on June 27, 1843, he said:

"The retirement of the late regent from Gwalior has removed all present apprehensions of collision with the troops of Gwalior. The British Resident has, in pursuance of his instructions, removed to his house at Dholepore, about thirty miles from Gwalior, and out of the Gwalior territory.

"The last accounts give reason to expect that the attempts by the successful faction to remove from the palace the brigade which has for some years guarded it may lead to a contest.

"Under all circumstances the most proper position for the British Resident seems to be that which has been taken at Dholepore, whence he will not return to Gwalior without specific instructions, and Lord Ellenborough's present impression is that the Resident should not return until there shall be a government at Gwalior possessing the appearance of good intention and stability, or until the Maharanee and the Chiefs shall earnestly desire his aid for the establishment of such a government."

Of course, according to the law of nations, the removal of an Envoy from a foreign Court means declaration of hostilities. So Ellenborough meant mischief when he took the above step. But his hypocrisy, duplicity and want of veracity regarding the removal of Colonel Spiers from Gwalior, are well exposed by Hope:

"We are now in the height of the rainy season, and it was necessary at once, if ever, that matters should be 'coming up . . . on the top of a floodtide.' The Governor-General thus addressed the Resident:—"The great heat usually leads you at this season to absent yourself from Gwalior and I see no sufficient reason for your now departing from your usual course.' The idea was not bad in itself, if such a very small game was worthy of a great Governor-General to play, but the fact was just the other way.....The Resident felt that he *must* acquiesce,.....He accordingly told the Durbar a little fib, and this was that he required 'change of air.'..... Nothing had then transpired to lead him to apprehend a storm, nothing to show very clearly duplicity, nothing to raise the fear of another 'humane bit of rescality.'"<sup>†</sup>

Ellenborough was bent upon mischief. Colonel Spiers was not going to be a pliant tool in his hands. So he was removed. His successor was Colonel Sleeman, best known for the influence he had over Thugs and Dacoits.§

But Sleeman was specially selected by Ellenborough, because his Lordship thought

\* Pp. 50-52.

† Pp. 54-56.

§ In his "Story of My Life," the celebrated novelist Captain Meadows Taylor writes:—"Had I been allowed to remain (in the civil employ), I should have been the first to disclose the horrible crime of Thuggee to the world, but it fell to the good fortune of Major Sleeman to do so afterwards."

Colonel Sleeman appears to have been a favoured child of fortune.

that officer would be a willing instrument in his hands in helping him in the absorption of the principality of Gwalior. Sleeman possessed the reputation of being a philanthropist. But Johnson might have as well said that the last refuge of scoundrels is philanthropy instead of patriotism. Sleeman was a catcher of thugs and thieves. If the adage "set a thief to catch a thief" be true, then Sleeman illustrated the truth of that proverb in his own life. He played the same game at Gwalior which a few years later on he played at Lucknow. As his doings paved the way to the annexation of Oudh, so his doings at Gwalior were designed to bring about the same object. But in both cases it is a well-known fact that he did not advocate annexation.

From his known antipathy to the House of Sindhia, Sleeman should not have been chosen to fill the situation of Resident at Gwalior. In his "Rambles and Recollections" Sleeman wrote :

"As a citizen of the world I could not help thinking that it would have been a great blessing upon a large portion of our species if an earthquake were to swallow up this Court of Gwalior and the army that surrounds it."

With his bias against the principality of Gwalior Sleeman was considered by Ellenborough a very 'safe' man for the Residency at Gwalior.

The new Minister, Dada Khasiwala, was an able man. But because he was an able man, therefore he was an eye-sore to Ellenborough. It was an English minister, Sir John Gorst, who from his place in the House of Commons in 1891 said that able men like tall poppies were to be suppressed.

So then Dada Khasiwala was marked out for his victim by Ellenborough. His Lordship wrote to the Queen on August, 13, 1843 :

"At Gwalior, the chief of the successful faction which lately expelled the regent, whose appointment had been sanctioned by the British Government, has apparently strengthened himself by paying the arrears of pay due to the troops, and by compelling the retirement, not unattended by violence on the part of the soldiers, of almost all the European and half-blood officers, in the service of the State. He has replaced, in situations from which they had been removed by the late Maharajah, on the representation of the British Resident, many persons notorious for their hostility to British interests, and for their connection with plunderers upon our frontier. The example of a successful defiance of the British Government at Gwalior has led the weak Holkar to pay less attention to our expressed wishes. Disturbances are expected on the borders of Berar, and it is hardly possible that the vicinity of the ungoverned districts belonging to the Gwalior State should not lead to much disposition to plunder along our frontier and that of our allies.

"The new minister at Gwalior appears to exercise a very strict control over the conduct and persons of the widow of the late Maharajah and of the present minor sovereign. He avows that the reports of Lord Ellenborough's approaching return to England and the certainty of the retirement (from ill-health) of Lieutenant Colonel Sutherland and of Mr. Clerk from the North-West Provinces, lead him to think that he shall have all his own way."

"Under these circumstances, the members of the Indian Government have unanimously decided upon the formation of an army at Agra (of about 12,000 men besides artillery), which will be commanded by Sir Hugh Gough, and other measures are in contemplation for the purpose of enabling the Government to concentrate a much larger force. ... ..

"Your Majesty will readily perceive that the continued existence of a hostile Government at Gwalior would be inconsistent with the continuance of our permanent influence in India, by which alone its peace is preserved,"

Ellenborough very unmistakeably struck the note of war against Sindhia's Government. In his letter to the Queen, dated Calcutta, September 19, 1843, he again referred to Dada Khasjiwala as follows:

"The Dada Khasjiwala, with whom every measure of an offensive or hostile character originated, still retains his influence over the Rani, and directs affairs. It would appear that he now conceals from her Highness the real purport of the communications addressed to her by the British minister.

"Upon the whole the state of India requires now, as indeed it always must, the exercise of extreme vigilance on the part of the Government, and constant preparation for the field."

The nature of the crime with which the Dada Khasjiwala was charged, has been explained by Hope as follows:

"It was said . . . that the Minister of the state had intercepted a letter from his lordship to his dear young 'Sister' the Maharanee . . . 'A high crime against the Maharanee, declared the Governor-General. The letter was written in the Persian language, and the Maharanee, a child of thirteen, could neither read nor write any language at all. There was only one man in the Capital who, by virtue of his hereditary office of 'Great Chamberlain and keeper of the crown jewels, could enter the most sacred of the female apartments, and that man was the Dada Khasjeeewalla. . . . Who then, except this man, had the privilege to open and read the Governor-General's letter . . . ? To suppose that this man, the favorite of the palace, cared to keep in ignorance a child, not out of the nursery, of the contents of a letter, albeit they conveyed censures upon himself, is in the last degree Quixotic. The only thing that can be said to explain the whole affair is *delenda est Carthago*', and, that being so, that this charge, contemptible as we regard it, would do as well as any other."

Lord Ellenborough had no right to interfere with the internal administration of the State. Yet he treated the existing treaties with Gwalior as so much waste paper, when he demanded to make over to him the Gwalior minister for punishment. In vain the Darbar asked the Governor-General to reconsider his demand, for it struck at the very honour of the Raj, and they went so far as to place him in confinement and appoint in his place one Ram Rao Phalkea, who had fought for the English by the side of Lake. But this did not appease the wrath of Ellenborough, who assembled one army on the north and another on the east frontier of Sindhia's dominions for the purpose of invasion, if that minister were not delivered to him. The Gwalior Darbar had to bow down to this show of force and give up the Minister, who was banished for life and died ten years afterwards in Benares.

Ellenborough's expressed desire was acceded to. But still he was not satisfied. He wanted to go to war with the State of Gwalior and have it annexed to the British dominions. He wrote to the Queen from Barrackpur, Nov. 20, 1843:

"At Gwalior the usurping minister has been seized by the chiefs and troops of the party opposed to him, but there is still no appearance of a settlement without authoritative intervention of the British Government, and seeing the urgent necessity of effecting such settlement in a secure and satisfactory manner, Lord Ellenborough will proceed on the 25th instant to Agra, which he will reach on the 11th of December, and find the army assembled."

The mere seizure of the person of the minister did not satisfy his Lordship, who wanted to get the minister banished altogether from the State. He wrote to the Queen from camp Dholpur on December 19, 1843:

"The hostile minister, the Dada Khasjeeewalla, was immediately delivered up upon the receipt by the Maharanee of the letter of which a copy is enclosed for your Majesty's perusal. He is a prisoner in the camp, and will be sent to the Fort at Agra."

Ellenborough misrepresented matters when he wrote that "the Dada Khasjiwala was immediately delivered up." But as said above, this was not true.

But Ellenborough was still not satisfied. He wrote in his letter of 19th December, 1843, to the Queen :

"The only remaining difficulty is apparently that of effecting the disbandment and disarming of a disaffected portion of the Gwalior army.

"In this measure the Chiefs would gladly co-operate ; but they may not be able to effect it without our active aid, or at least without the support they would derive from the near approach of our army. . . .

"The existence of an army of such strength in that position must very seriously embarrass the disposition of troops we might be desirous of making to meet a coming danger from the Sutlej."

Here the British lord let the cat out of the bag. He wanted to take the Panjab and as he had written to the Duke of Wellington in his letter dated Agra, April 22, 1843 :

"Depend upon it, I will never, if I can possibly avoid it, have two things on my hands at a time."

So he decided to crush Gwalior first.

Hope says :

"The Dada having been given up, there was then an end of the *causus belli*. Nothing of the kind. 'I have found,' said his Lordship to the new Minister, Ram Rao Phalkea, who had been sent by the Durbar to Agra to wait on him, 'a clause in a treaty made with Dowlut Rao Scindea at Boorhanpoor, which obliges the British Government, if at any time Scindea should be unable to cope with his enemies, to afford him military assistance. It is true, indeed, that the clause carefully guards against the danger of a great military power forcing its unsolicited assistance on a very weak one by the insertion of the word *on the requisition of the Maharajah*, but it is impossible, on account of his tender years, for Gyajee Scindea to make the requisition, and, as I am the only judge of his necessities, I shall march my army to Gwalior.' . . . Ram Rao Phalkea was astounded and replied . . . 'as nothing whatever had been mooted on the Boorhanpoor treaty, he had brought with him no copy of it to refer to . . . and that the invasion of a friendly state on such a pretext was quite a strange anomaly in the conduct of the Honorable Company.' . . . But all his arguments, all protestations failed, as would those of a goose who with equal pertinacity declined the proffered aid of a hungry fox."\*

Ellenborough thus expressed his intentions in the letter to the Queen from which extracts have been given above :

"The late Maharajah of Gwalior had allotted certain revenues for the maintenance of a corps of about 1400 men, to be commanded by British officers, and constantly stationed in the Gwalior territory. This corps has done excellent service, and it is proposed to obtain from the Gwalior State the assignment of further revenues for the purpose of raising very considerably the amount of this useful force.

"It is proposed to procure the consent of the Gwalior State to the placing under British adminis-

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\* Pp. 66-67.

tration the district of which the revenues will be so assigned to the extent at least of giving to the British Government the power of nominating and removing persons in authority, and thus securing the real co-operation of all for the maintenance of order."

Ellenborough knew that he had no right to dictate terms to the Sindhia. He told a brazenfaced lie to Ram Rao Phalkea when he pretended that such a right existed under the Burhanpur treaty. Says Hope :

"Respecting the clause in the Boorhanpur treaty on which the Governor-General pretended to justify the invasion, it cannot be controverted that there was no such treaty in existence. That which had been made in 1804, containing a stipulation of the kind alleged, was signed to meet the difficulties arising from the inroads of the Pindarees, but abrogated the following year to serve our own interests. The whole thing was a barefaced sham, and was, as Mr. Thornton well described it, owing to 'the facility with which the surrender of the Dada had been yielded, under the influence of terror imposed by the march of the British force, that a change in the policy of the Governor-General was effected, and the determination arrived' at to employ that *terror* as an instrument for obtaining ulterior objects,"\*

So Ellenborough, without any *causus belli*, invaded the territory of Sindhia, for he crossed the frontier and marched his troops into the principality of Gwalior. The peace-loving people of this Hindu State could not believe that their hearths and homes would be invaded by the orders of the Christian Governor-General. They were therefore quite unprepared and so the Sindhia's frontier was crossed without any difficulty by Ellenborough. That eminently "Christian" judge of Her Majesty's High Court of Agra, Mr. William Edwards, in his "Reminiscences of a Bengal Civilian," writes, for he was with Ellenborough :

"We were thus enabled to cross the Chumbul without opposition, an operation which, had that river, with its precipitous banks, been defended, could not have been effected without heavy loss."

But when the people saw that the Governor-General was thirsting for their blood, they very hurriedly prepared for fighting the British troops. So the battles of Maharajpur and Punniar were the result.

Both these battles were fought on the same day. *i.e.*, 29th December, 1843. Of course, fortune favoured the British arms, for besides good luck they had been preparing for the battles since some time previously, and they had more troops and were well-versed in the Machiavellian arts of raising traitors in the camp of their enemy, and their resources were almost inexhaustible. But the English generals did not show much of military strategy in the battle of Maharajpur. The manner in which they had disposed of their troops would have resulted in a disaster but for certain circumstances which turned in their favor.†

Some of the atrocities perpetrated in these two battles by the British have been described by Hope, who writes

\* Pp. 71-72

† Edwards narrated the fight in detail. See pages 66 *et seq* of his "Reminiscences of a Bengal Civilian."

See also Ellenborough's description in his letter to the Duke of Wellington, dated camp Gwalior, Jan. 21, 1844, in Lord Colchester's History of the Indian Administration of Lord Ellenborough, pp. 412 *et seq*.

"Some Mahratta sepoy, twenty or thirty in number, having discharged their last cartridge, were fleeing from the field, but, finding themselves surrounded by our troops, they rushed into a native's house, the family having fortunately abandoned it, and barricaded the doors. Some of our men set fire to the thatched roof and these miserable sepoy were burnt to ashes. As long as a month afterwards the walls of the house and the charred remains of the men could be seen by any traveller just as they had been left on the day of the battle—deliberately allowed to remain by an angry people with a view to cause a feeling of deeper hatred than ever against our race. At the intercession of an European officer, a personal friend of Ram Rao Phalkea, the minister, the walls were taken down, the remains removed, and the soil ploughed for cultivation, to prevent the spot from being visited as the place of martyrs."

He also mentions an atrocious deed that happened at the battle at Punniar.

"A young Portuguese officer, as soon as his regiment had been dispersed, went up, on the field, to one of our brigade-majors, and presenting his sword, asked to have his life spared. The brigade-major, declined the sword, and expressed his willingness to do all he could, and desired him to keep close to his side. Unhappily, the Major was on horseback, while the Portuguese was on foot. A demon in the rear had kept his tigerish eyes on the poor fellow, and a chance occurring, he plunged a bayonet through his body, making an exclamation while doing so in language too frightful to repeat. It may be added that Scindea's contingent was, with exquisite taste, made to act against that state of whose salt the officers and men of that body had long partaken, some of the latter being of the same village and country from which Gyajee Scindea had recently come."†

And these were the men who were talking of humanity. Writes Hope :

"The day before a shot was fired, Lord Ellenborough issued a proclamation in the English language, intended, we presume, for the people of England, in which he explained his intentions. In it we find that his Lordship was much moved by sentiments of pity towards the Maharaja, by a determination to brook no hostility to the British Government by *individuals* at his Court, and by a desire to have—which is the old story when the appetite for a native State is particularly sharp—a *quiet frontier*.....To maintain unimpaired the position we now hold is a duty, not to ourselves alone, but to *humanity*...The adoption of new views of policy, weakness under the name of moderation, and pusillanimity under that of forbearance, would not avert from our own subjects, and from our own territories, the evils we let loose upon India, and the only result of false measures would be to remove the scene of a contest, altogether inevitable, from Gwalior to Allahabad, there to be carried on with diminished force, a disheartened army, and a disaffected people.....If a contest were altogether inevitable, why should it be at Allahabad? .....Well, we will unravel the mystery. It was all owing to a Napoleonic instinct! It was surmised, that the recent demise of Runjeet Singh would lead to struggles for the masterdom of the Punjab, that a proud army at Lahore might even venture to cross the Sutledge and try its mettle against British soldiers, and that it was just possible that we might have to fall back upon Allahabad. There we should find the Gwalior army ready to kick us nearer to Calcutta and it was clear that, under this marvellous change of fortune, our force would be 'diminished,' our army 'disheartened,' and the people 'disaffected.' So then, 'pity towards Gyajee Scindea', the determination to brook no hostility by *individuals* at his Court, and the desire to have 'a quiet frontier' were what the lawyers call false colourings and pretences, the real motive being Napoleonic strategy, which taught Lord Ellenborough to destroy even an unoffending army rather than allow it to exist in his rear." §

After the easy victories gained at Maharajpur and Punniar, the principality of Gwalior lay at the feet of Ellenborough. He must have compared himself to Alexander



or Caesar, Napoleon or Wellington. He could have wiped out the existence of this principality.\* But what was his motive for not doing so? Hope has tried to answer this question by saying:

"We are perfectly certain, though the fact does not admit of positive proof, that it was the fear of rousing once more the resentment of powerful individuals in Parliament that just turned the scale and no more in favor of Sindhia."

The annexation of Sindh was very unpopular and Lord Ellenborough was condemned by the Parliament and the press of England for it. So he was obliged to be moderate with Gwalior. Had Gwalior been annexed, a general rising of the native States would have been the probable result. This is hinted at by Ellenborough, for in his letter of 16th February, 1844, he wrote to the Queen:

"Lord Ellenborough has reason to think that the moderation evinced in the treatment of the Gwalior State after the recent victories has produced a favourable impression upon the minds of the native princes of India, and has conciliated them towards the British Government, while the victories will, for the present at least, have the effect of putting an end to all ideas of resistance to British power."

But a new treaty was forced upon Sindhia and the State of Gwalior was shorn of much of its importance. It lost its independence and became a feudatory of the British Government.

\* Mr. Thornton, in his history of India, writes that "the issue of his Lordship's official papers appeared to have had no other purpose, but to give expression to a feeling of triumph, and to gratify a desire of treating the Gwalior State as a conquered country.... Judging from the language held on the subject, it seems to have been thought an act of extraordinary lenity that the State should have been suffered to exist at all!"

## CHAPTER LXXV

### ANNEXATION OF KYTHAL

Kythal was a Cis-Satlaj Sikh State which entered into treaty with the British Government in 1809.

The chiefs of the Cis-Satlaj States never dreamt when they entered into alliance with the British that their states would be annexed to the territory of the East India Company for want of heirs. For, according to the Hindu law, they knew they could always adopt heirs in the event of the failure of a progeny. This is exactly what the British interpreters of the Treaty would not admit. So when the Kythal Chief died, his State was annexed by Ellenborough. But this annexation was expressed by the euphemistic phrase "lapse." The State had not been originally granted to the Kythal Chief by the British that it could have "lapsed" to them.

However, it was not without some difficulty that Kythal State was acquired by the British. Ellenborough in his letter, dated Agra, April 20, 1843, to the Queen wrote:

"The Chief of Kythul, one of the protected Sikh States within thirty miles of Kurnaul, having died without heirs, four-fifths of his territory lapsed to the British Government, and the remaining fifth became the property of the distant branch of the family. A political officer was sent with a small escort, afterwards increased to 300 men, to receive possession of Kythul, which belongs to the lapsed portion of the territory, but he was met by passive resistance on the part of the female relations and the ministers of the late chief. The military retainers of the State flocked to Kythul and a most indiscreet disposition of a part of the small cavalry escort having been made, attack was invited, and the consequence was the repulse of the whole force with the political officer with some loss, and its retirement to Kurnaul.

Ellenborough, on being informed that troops would be wanted, had directed that so large a force should be taken as would preclude the chance of any collision. Unfortunately the collision took place, through the indiscretion of the officer at Kythul, before the direction could be acted upon. On the 4th, however, 1800 troops were assembled at Thanesar, and on their arrival on the 16th within eight miles of Kythul it was found that the town and fort were evacuated by the armed retainers on the 15th. The ministers and the merchants of the place had come into the British camp on the 14th.

"What has happened is very much to be regretted, although it has been repaired.

"The affair might have become very serious had not the place been so soon approached by a preponderating force after the unfortunate collision on the 10th."

## CHAPTER LXXVI.

### INTRIGUES AGAINST THE PANJAB.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh died in 1839 when Auckland was the Governor-General of India. After his death there was anarchy, as it were, in the Panjab. The distracted state of that land was very coolly seen by the British. They did not move their little finger to put down the disturbances which were of almost daily occurrence in that province of the five rivers. There are reasons to believe that the British were the real authors of these disturbances. The *British Friend of India*, published in London, wrote in its issue of December, 1843, as follows:

"We have no proof that the Company instigated all the king-killing which has been perpetrated in the Panjab since Runjit died, but, bearing in mind their trade, and the wonderful success which has attended their operations in that line, in Bengal, in the Carnatic, and elsewhere, both amongst the Moghuls and the Mahrattas, with Rajahs and Nabobs, we must say that we smell a rat, we strongly suspect the Company's corrupt influence has been employed in framing and fomenting these plots, which it is the interest and desire of the Crown and people of Britain rather to have counteracted, . . . . . but a mercenary Company, wielding a hireling army, cannot live but by plunder . . . . . but, we see too clearly, that backed as it necessarily now is, by all the resources of Britain, Lahore will be sacked, the Kingdom rent in pieces."\*

The British, since a very long time, had been very eagerly looking forward to the day to become masters of the hoarded wealth of Ranjit Singh as well as of his dominion. To achieve this end they had been intriguing and conspiring against the Panjab. Ellenborough, even before his departure from England, had marked that province as one of his victims. Reading his Indian letters to the Queen and the Duke of Wellington, edited by Lord Colchester, between the lines, there can be no doubt, that the British instigated all the disturbances in the Panjab in order to weaken it and then to easily annex it.

Wellington, whose protege Ellenborough was, also had his eyes on the Panjab. Writing to Ellenborough on 30th March, 1842, he said:

"Looking at our position in the North-West, I see upon the river Sutlej a short line of defence, covered by the Punjab and its rivers, with the Government of which country we are in alliance. It is true that the Sikh Government is in an unsettled state, and not what it was when governed by Runjeet Singh at the commencement of the war in Afghanistan. But the weakness of the government, or the absence of all government, in the Punjab, and the possibility of hostility in that part of the Sikh State, would be an additional inducement to the British Government to attend to the defences of our own weakest frontier, even if the consequences of the state of confusion in the government of the Punjab should eventually require the active interference of the British Government in order to settle the government of a country where tranquillity is so essential to its own protection and safety."

"While these measures should be in the course of execution, it would be necessary that an army should be assembled towards the Sutlej....

"An army in this position might maintain itself. It might move forward into the Punjab, whether

as an offensive movement, with a view to conquest, or as one defensive, with a view to attack its enemy at the passage of some of the rivers in that country, or to threaten the communications of an enemy advancing from the North-West."

Writing to Lord Fitzgerald on 6th April, 1842, his grace the Iron Duke said:

"I am very glad to see such good accounts of the state of the Sikh Government. It must be very desirable to maintain its existence in the Punjab. But this I must say, if we are to maintain our position in Afghanistan, we ought to have Peshawar, the Khyber Pass, Jellalabad, and the passes between that post and Cabul."

The Iron Duke after all blurted out the necessity for taking the Panjab. No wonder that his protege, Ellenborough, should have tried his best to create dissensions and distractions in the Panjab in order to get it converted into a British Province. The Machiavellian policy that he was following to get his object accomplished, his lordship has himself narrated with brutal frankness in some of his letters to the Duke and the Queen. Thus in his letter of 7th June, 1842, he wrote to the Duke:

"I have already, as you are aware, said what I could to dissuade the Sikhs or rather Dhian Singh and Gholab Singh, the Jummoo Rajahs, from their wild views of conquest beyond the Himalayas....I have at the same time not discouraged another folly of theirs—that of advancing their frontier towards Cabul....If they accede to this arrangement and endeavour to carry it out, we shall have placed an irreconcilable enemy to the Afghans between them and us, and hold that enemy to the Afghans, occupied as he must be in defending himself against them, in entire subjection to us by our position upon the Sutlej, within a few marches of Umritsir and Lahore. Such I wish to make our position on our North-Western frontier."

Again he wrote to the Duke on October 18th, 1842:

"I agreed to permit the Sikhs to occupy Jellalabad on our retiring from it....You will see into what a false position their ambition leads them. They will be obliged to keep their principal force in that quarter, and Lahore and Umritsir will remain with insufficient garrison, within a few marches of the Sutlej, on which I shall, in twelve days, at any time, be able to assemble three European and eleven native battalions, one European regiment of cavalry, two regiments of Native cavalry and two irregular cavalry, and twenty-four guns.

"The state of the Punjab is, therefore, under my foot. I only desire, however, that it should be faithful and innocuous. The conflict of parties in the Punjab will render it more dependent every year, and indeed, he who knows it best does not think the Government can last a year. I intend to be most courteous and liberal to both parties, and to wait till I am called in."

In his letter of January 18, 1843 to the Duke, he thus described the Sikh army:

"A return mission was sent to Lahore, and most cordially received. The Maharaja paraded 65,900 men and 200 guns, but it took eight hours to get them into line, and when placed they did not move. Half the guns were without draught. The irregulars are said to have been very fine. The troops are disciplined, some in the French, some in the English, and some in the Sikh manner, and there is no subordination. The arrival of General Ventura is anxiously expected by the army. I am glad all is said before he comes."

It is not improbable that General Ventura was an emissary in the pay of the British with the Sikh army. When General Ventura returned, he had some communication with him. So he wrote to the Duke on 20th October, 1843:

"Ventura anticipates a long anarchy, from which the ultimate refuge will be in our protection, I agree with him."

Regarding what he called the "game," he wrote in the same letter to the Duke:

"The time cannot be very distant when the Punjab will fall into our management, and the question will be what we shall do as respects the Hills. Probably the Hills will be very much divided under separate governments, and I look to the protection of our Government being ultimately extended to the Sikhs of the Plains and the Rajpoots of the Hills, and the Mussalmans of Mooltan, precisely as it is now to the Sikh Chiefs on the left of the Sutlej. The Khalsa lands are worth half a million, and the payments from the Jagheer may be as much. There would also be lapses of estates. *I do not look to this state of things likely to occur next year, but as being ultimately inevitable if we do not bring on union against ourselves and indisposition to our rule by some precipitate interference. I should tell you, however, that there is, as there long has been, a great disposition, even in quarters not military, to disturb the game.*"

The words put in italics, used with brutal frankness, need no comments. On 16th February, 1844, Ellenborough wrote to the Queen :

"Rajah Heera Singh remains at Lahore without power over the army. One regiment is already arrived at Lahore from Peshawar against orders, in order to extort more pay, and it remains unpunished. Other regiments at Peshawar threaten to leave it, and it seems doubtful whether this mutinous desertion of Peshawar by the Sikh troops may not enable the Afghans to reoccupy it.

"In the hills, Rajah Gholab Singh is extending his power with his usual unscrupulous disregard of the rights of others and of the supremacy of the State he pretends to serve. This conduct, however, makes him very odious to the Sikhs at Lahore.....

"...It is to be hoped that the state of the Punjab may not render necessary in December next an operation beyond the Sutlej : but every prudent preparation will be made with a view to enabling the army to undertake that operation whenever it may become necessary. *It must be always viewed as a measure which can only be deferred.* Your Majesty may be assured that Lord Ellenborough is fully aware of its magnitude and its importance. He knows that it cannot be devoid of great risk, and that, under all circumstances, it must be of a protracted character. Lord Ellenborough knows your Majesty's earnest desire to maintain peace and your Majesty may at once rely on his doing everything which can prudently be done to avoid war and at the same time to secure success in a war, should it become inevitable."

One looks in vain in the public records to find anything to show that Ellenborough ever took any steps to avoid war. On the contrary, he did everything that lay in his power to provoke the Sikhs to hostilities. We find him writing to the Queen on the 21st April, 1844 :

"Lord Ellenborough cannot but feel that the termination of the present state of things in the Punjab is essential to the security of the British power in India, *but he will wait, cautiously preparing our strength for a contest he would willingly defer, but which he considers inevitable.*"

Writing to Wellington on 20th April, 1844, he said :

"We can only consider our relations with Lahore to be those of an armed truce.

"I earnestly hope nothing may compel us to cross the Sutlej, and *that we may have no attack to repel till November, 1845.* I shall then be prepared for anything. In the meantime we do all we can in a quiet way to strengthen ourselves."

The words put in italics are very significant ones. The Sikhs crossed the Satlaj about the time which, according to Ellenborough's calculation, would be convenient for the British to receive them. Does it not show conclusively the deep scheme of the British in bringing on the war with the Sikhs ?

Ellenborough was very jubilant over his successful Machiavellian policy which he followed towards the Sikhs. He wrote to the Duke on May 9, 1844 :

## CHAPTER LXXVII

### OTHER ACTS OF ELLENBOROUGH

Ellenborough had his attention directed to the rich Muhammadan principality of the Deccan. With his pronounced antipathy to and hatred of Muhammadans, whom he always tried to reduce to political non-entity, he would have gladly exterminated the existence of the State of Hyderabad (Deccan) like that of its namesake in Sindh, had he got an opportunity to do so. His correspondence shows that he was trying to seize any opportunity to absorb that State. Thus he wrote to the Queen from Agra on May 11, 1843:

"The financial difficulties of the Nizam's Government are become very serious, and it may become absolutely necessary to adopt some measure for his relief. Lord Ellenborough would willingly defer any such measure until it might be made the condition of some decided improvement of the relations between the British Government and that of the Nizam, having for its object the condition of his Highness's dominions."

The significance of the diplomatic language in which the above letter is clothed is too apparent to need comment.

The following extract from his letter to the Queen dated Allahabad, June 27, 1843, reveals the hostile intentions that he entertained against the State of Hyderabad:

"Some persons engaged in the insurrection of 1841 and 1842 have proceeded to Berar from Hyderabad in the Deccan, and numerous Arabs are entertained there. The day cannot be distant when it will be absolutely necessary to interfere with the strong arm for the expulsion of the Arabs from the Nizam's dominion, in which they now occupy half the forts, but Lord Ellenborough deems it advisable to do one thing at a time, and circumstances do not yet allow of our devoting our force to the permanent pacification of the Deccan."

How he wanted to absorb the Nizam's principality is evident from his letter to the Queen dated August 13, 1843:

"The financial difficulties of the Nizam's Government have led to the resignation of the old minister, and their tendency is to place the whole of his Highness's dominions for a series of years, if not permanently, under the British administration, in consideration of a loan of a million, which must be advanced for the payment of the troops and of debts to bankers and others. The decision of the Nizam upon the several propositions submitted to his Highness will be known in a few days."

Lord Ellenborough's hands were too full with affairs in Northern India to deal that blow to the Nizam's dominions which he had intended.

Even before his departure from England, Ellenborough had marked out Nepal as his intended victim. Ever since his arrival in India, he kept a very watchful eye on all the political transactions of that State. There can be no doubt that he was eagerly looking forward for an opportunity to deprive it of its independence. But fortunately for the "heathen" natives of that principality, the Christian Governor-General had no opportunity to impose the yoke of subjugation on their necks.\*

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\* In his letters to the Queen Victoria as well as the Duke of Wellington, Ellenborough has

There was one other small state whose independent existence was wiped out by Ellenborough. That small state was Jytpur in Bundelkhand. Sleeman, who was Political Agent of Bundelkhand at that time, should be held responsible for this act of spoliation. Ellenborough wrote to the Queen on December 19, 1842 :

"In Bundelcund the two forts belonging to the Rajah of Jytpore, who in the course of the last summer, evinced hostility to the British Government, were taken possession of, without resistance, on the 27th of November.

"The Raj of Jytpore has been confiscated and given to the most popular chief in Bundelkhand. The grounds upon which this has been done, and the probable effects of the measure, will be shown to your Majesty by the enclosed copies of letters to and from Major Sleeman.

"The camp of the Rajah of Jytpore was attacked on the 7th instant, and he made his escape with about ten followers."

It need hardly be added that the whole transaction was high-handed and certainly not one of justice. After this no wonder that Sleeman was such a *persona grata* with those Governors-General who wanted to absorb the principalities of any native sovereigns. This accounts for his appointment to the Residency at Gwalior and later at Lucknow.

Ellenborough was no friend of Muhammadans, and consequently could not have been of the Mughal Emperor of Delhi. Up to his time, every Britisher in India used to pay his homage to the titular Emperor of Delhi. But he stopped this and thus lowered the dignity of the descendant of Babar and Akbar. Edwards in his *Reminiscences of a Bengal Civilian* writes :

"The Governor-General immediately issued instructions, forbidding the presentation in future to the King of any offerings by British subjects, and directed me to ascertain the average annual amount of gifts received by his Majesty for the past ten years, in order that an equivalent amount should be added to the royal stipend from the British treasury in future."

It should be remembered, as stated by the same writer in another place of his work (p. 307), that

"Up to 1842, the Governors-General who visited Delhi were in the habit of presenting, through their Secretaries, a nuzzur of 101 gold mohurs to the Emperor as a mark of fealty and acknowledgment of holding the British territories in India subject to his authority.....It is scarcely, therefore, to be wondered at that the Imperial house of Delhi never lost, in native estimation, its position of dignity and importance."

No wonder that the Delhi people joined the Mutineers in 1857 to avenge the wrongs and injuries that had been inflicted on the representative of the House of Babar.

Ellenborough had in contemplation to further lower the dignity of the Mughal. This is evident from the correspondence between him and the Duke of Wellington. The latter in his letter dated Walmer Castle, September 27, 1842, wrote to Ellenborough :

very frequently mentioned all that was passing in Nepal and of which he could get any information. See pages 32, 37, 41, 58, 63, 69, 79, 88, 114, 157, 195 and 200 of Colchester's *Ellenborough's Indian Administration*.

"However inconvenient to retain the Moghul and his palace, and his court and retainers, in the town, I should prefer to leave them there than to incur the odium of removing them, and of exposing—particularly the Moghul and his family—to the inconvenience and expense, and degradation in the eyes of those attached to him, of a forced removal.

"In my opinion, the principle on which the works at Delhi are constructed is a good one. . . .

"It appears to me that the palace of the Mogul would be under the guns of this citadel." . . .

In reply to the above letter, Ellenborough wrote on December 18, 1842 :

"... I had already come to your conclusion that it would be an unadvisable step to do anything having the appearance of violence towards the old king. With his successor, my successor may be able to make some arrangement for the transfer to us of the citadel. *To have in our hands the ancient seat of empire, and to administer the government from it, has ever seemed to me to be a very great object.*"

Had Ellenborough remained a few more years in India he would have done what he had expressed in the words which we have italicised in the above extract. The humiliation of the king of Delhi would have been then complete.

As said so many times before, Ellenborough was no friend of Muhammadans. He annexed the Muhammadan state of Sindh. He had his eyes on the Nizam's dominion in the Deccan. He humiliated the Mughal king of Delhi in the estimation of others. But then there was the Musalman kingdom of Oudh. Almost every Governor-General looked covetously to that kingdom. The Muhammadan kings of Oudh used to be bled by Christian Governors-General of India. Ellenborough also bled one, and it was, therefore, perhaps that he did not propose to annex that kingdom to the British dominions during his regime.

The king of Oudh used to be the wet-nurse of the British rulers of India. So he was made to act again towards Ellenborough. Writing to the Duke of Wellington in September 16, 1842, the Governor-General wrote :

"I have got the King of Oudh to lend 10 lacs more."

Of course, it was not convenient for Ellenborough to kill the goose that laid the golden eggs and therefore, he left the kingdom of Oudh out of consideration of annexation in his time.



## CHAPTER LXXVIII

### RECALL OF ELLENBOROUGH

Ellenborough's foreign policy was an aggressive one. He had for his prototype the Marquess Wellesley, whose example he was desirous of closely imitating, as indeed on whose advice he was acting. During his tenure of office of two years and a half, proportionately he fought more battles than Wellesley during the same period. His lordship in the speech delivered at the dinner given in his honour by the Court of Directors of the Honourable East India Company, November 3, 1841, said that he was going out to India

"to restore peace to Asia, and with peace, that sense of entire security, without which peace itself is almost valueless; from that peace, so secured, to draw the means of creating a surplus revenue, the best guarantee of public improvement, and of liberal, even of *honest* government—in possession of that surplus revenue, to emulate the magnificent beneficence of the Mahometan Emperors, in their great works of public utility, to perfect and extend the canals of irrigation." ..."

But all the time he was in India, he did nothing to restore peace to Asia or improve the condition of the people of India. He took no step 'for creating a surplus revenue.' He enhanced the tax on salt in order to promote the happiness of the people of India.

His conduct in the administration of India was such that it called forth the censure of the Court of Directors of the East India Company. In his letter of 5th April, 1843' the Duke of Wellington informed Ellenborough why the authorities at home were not pleased with him. He wrote:

"It appears that the Court has stated several grounds of complaint with you. I say nothing of the gates of Somnauth, which is, I think, made a *cheval de bataille* to acquire popularity for the cause. ...

"The Court then complains of your continued absence from the seat of your Government, Fort William, and of the consequent separation from your Council. It complains of large expenses to be incurred for forming new cantonments, barracks, and stations for the army, European troops as well as native, without previously taking the pleasure of the Court, or giving to it the requisite information of the necessity for the new and expensive establishments, of the amount of the expense which they will occasion, or enabling the Court to acquire such information by the perusal of the reports recorded on the proceedings of the Court in the usual course, and the deliberations of the members of the Court thereupon, before any such plans could be adopted and ordered for execution, even if the previous sanction of the Court should not, according to order, have been applied for."

Again in Parliament also his conduct was censured. The Duke writing to Ellenborough on 5th July, 1843, said:

"The opposition in Parliament had, at a very early period of the session, endeavoured by sarcasm and observations upon passages and words in your general orders and letter upon the gates of Somnauth, to ridicule your pacific professions, to place them in contrast with your conduct in Scinde, and to draw the conclusion that, notwithstanding your blame of the conduct of your predecessor in office, you were acting with views of conquest inconsistent with the declarations and principle of the law."

The conduct of Ellenborough in the administration was such that the Court of Directors were compelled to recall him. He was an autocrat and wished to govern India not with "benevolent" but absolute "despotism." In his letter to Wellington, dated April 22, 1843, he wrote :

"Our only danger is from England, because people there will think that India can be governed according to their own last new notion, and still more will believe that the press of India tells one word of truth. Then against us, too, we have the jobbing and liti mindedness of the Directors, intriguing and caballing against a Government nominally their own, because it will not make patronage practically their own. India can only be governed by great views, and as India ; and these gentlemen would have me govern it on little views, and as England, but that I will not do."

So after all the autocrat had to deliver the Government of India into the hands of Lord Hardinge on 1st August, 1844.\*

\* Sir Robert Peel, in a private letter to Hardinge wrote :

"Ellenborough has been here some days. We have made him an Earl and given him the Red Ribbon. I have met him twice at Windsor Castle. Lord Lonsdale is willing and wishes to relinquish the Post Office. I wrote to Lord Ellenborough a few days since offering him that office and a seat in the Cabinet, or if he preferred it, an attempt on my part to induce the Duke of Buccleuch to take the Post Office, leaving the Privy Seal vacant for Ellenborough. Ellenborough, perhaps wisely, declined both proposals, in a friendly letter, intimating, however, that his head has been so full of grand conceptions and schemes with great results, that Post Offices and Privy Seals were beneath his notice. I think he will find that he has erroneous notions of his position. His return here has not caused the slightest sensation. There is no curiosity, among this most curious people, to see so great a performer on the Indian theatre. He will not infect the people of this country with the love of military glory. If you can keep peace, reduce expenses, extend commerce, and strengthen our hold on India by confidence in our justice and kindness and wisdom, you will be received here on your return with acclamations a thousand times louder and a welcome infinitely more cordial than if you have a dozen victories to boast of and annex the Punjab to the overgrown Empire of India."

## CHAPTER LXXIX

### LORD HARDINGE'S ADMINISTRATION

(1844-48)

A certain British officer, under the pseudonym of "Carnaticus," wrote in the *Asiatic Journal* for May, 1821 :

"We must at once admit that our conquest of India was, through every struggle, more owing to the weakness of the Asiatic character than to the bare effect of our own brilliant achievements, and empire after empire rolled in upon us when we were merely contemplating the protection of our trade, or repelling insult. Kingdoms have been vacated for us, as if by magic spell, and on the same principle we may set down as certain, that whenever one-twentieth part of the population of India becomes as provident and as scheming as ourselves, we shall run back again, in the same ratio of velocity, the same course of our original insignificance."

The scheming nature of the English stands in bold relief in the manner in which they succeeded in bringing about the war with the Sikhs. Even in the lifetime of Maharaja Ranjit Singh the English were conspiring against him. After his death during the regime of Ellenborough, the scheming English were making warlike preparations and fomenting dissensions amongst the Sikhs in order not to disturb the "game." The "game," according to Ellenborough, would not be fully prepared before November, 1845. Although he had to leave India before that time, yet the "game" was not to be given up. His departure from India did not mean that the policy which he was pursuing or which dominated his administration was to be given up. In his letter of July 2, 1844, to the Duke of Wellington, Ellenborough wrote :

"Immediately on the receipt of the news of my removal I advised the Government to send letters by express to all native Courts, to assure them that the change would not affect the policy of the Government, which would be altogether maintained by my successor. I wrote myself to the principal Residents to the same effect,..."

In the same letter he also wrote :

"I remain to receive Sir Henry Hardinge. All the public letters to England, which he cannot have seen, have been copied for him, and sent to Madras."

Sir Henry Hardinge was a kinsman by marriage of Ellenborough. So he, like Ellenborough, did not disturb the "game," but like him followed the same course.\* The authorities in England expected to go to war with the Sikhs and therefore selected Hardinge, who was a soldier-statesman, Hardinge's biographer, his own son, writes :†

\* In his letter to Major Broadfoot, dated Calcutta, June 17, 1844, Ellenborough wrote :

"You will have heard that the Court of Directors have thought fit to recall me. My successor will carry out all my views. He is my most confidential friend, with whom I have communicated upon all public subjects for thirty years."

† P. 48, Hardinge, Rulers of India Series.

"Without doubt the selection of a distinguished soldier, who also possessed the experience of a Cabinet Minister, rather pointed to the anticipation of war. A few years before, on the receipt of the news of the Kabul disasters (1842) Sir Henry Hardinge had been pressed to accept the command of the Indian army, which for urgent private reasons he was compelled to decline. Now, on being offered the higher office of the Governor-General, he felt it an imperative duty to waive all personal considerations."

Hardinge was ambitious and therefore he accepted the office of Governor-General. Sir Charles Napier, who knew Hardinge well, wrote about him :

"His ambition is unbounded, and though he would have faced the Directors fearlessly, and the press too, any day in the week, if it suited his purpose, he did not, because his ambition is to glide into elevation, *he has wound and will wind like a serpent up the pillar of fame.*"\*

It is clear that Peel's ministry, in anticipation of the war with the Sikhs, appointed Hardinge as Governor-General of India. And from the day of his assuming the duties of that office he applied himself assiduously to the amassing of troops and making other necessary warlike preparations on the then North-Western frontier. A writer in the *Quarterly Review* for June, 1846, wrote :

"That he (Hardinge) kept his eye on the Punjab, and was neither regardless of the confusion which its affairs were falling into, nor of the consequences to which this might possibly lead, is most certain. He had already directed the works at Ludhiana and Ferozpur to be strengthened, and raised the garrison of the latter place from 4000 to 7000 men. The former was held by about 6000, and at Ambala, where Gough's head quarters were established, and among the cantonments in the rear there were about 7500 of all arms."

His son, in the biographical sketch (p. 76) already referred to above, has given in a tabular form the increased preparation made by Lord Hardinge in the different cantonments on the North-West frontier. The table is reproduced below :

Post.	Strength as left by Ellenborough.	Strength at first breaking out of war.	Increased preparation made by Lord Hardinge.
Ferozpur	4596 men 12 guns	10472 men 24 guns	5876 men 12 guns
Ludhiana	3080 " 12 "	7235 " 12 "	4205 " 0 "
Ambala	4118 " 24 "	12972 " 32 "	8859 " 8 "
Meerut	5878 " 18 "	9844 " 26 "	3972 " 8 "
Whole Frontier, exclusive of Hill Stations.	17612 " 66 "	40528 " 94 "	22911 " 28 "

Ellenborough had ordered fifty-six boats to be built on the Indus. When these were ready, they were brought up to Ferozpur in September, 1845, by Hardinge's order.†

\* *Life of Sir Charles Napier*, Vol. IV, p. 205.

† The Governor-General's Private Secretary, who happened to be his own son, in a long and confidential letter, dated February 20, 1845, wrote to Major Broadfoot : "It is not desirable that the purposes to which these boats can be applied should unnecessarily transpire. ..

"But if any inquiry should be made hereafter, your answer will be that this flotilla of boats is not at present required on the lower Indus, that our commissariat arrangements do require the employment of boats between Ferozpoore and Sukkur for the supply of the latter place with grain

In his letter of April 20, 1844, Ellenborough had written to Wellington:

"I earnestly hope nothing may compel us to cross the Sutlej, and that we may have no attack to repel till November, 1845. I shall then be prepared for anything. In the meantime we do all we can in a quiet way to strengthen ourselves."

So by November, 1845, warlike preparations on the part of the British were complete. And as by the middle of that month the Sikhs proclaimed war and after a few weeks' time actually crossed the Sutlej, there is but one conclusion to be drawn from these events, that the First Panjab War was a pre-arranged affair, just like the different parts assigned to the actors on a theatrical stage by the stage-master. The stage-master in this instance were the British trained in the school of occidental diplomacy of Machiavelli.

The Lahore Darbar, who were controlling the affairs of the Panjab, did not wish to go to war with the British. Their intentions were quite pacific, and accordingly they asked the British Agent, Major Broadfoot, for a British force to be permanently stationed at Lahore. That is to say, they were desirous of what is euphemistically called by Lord Wellesley "subsidiary alliance" with the British. But this was not convenient to the English, and so they did not accede to this request of the Darbar.

From the warlike preparations on the part of the British, from the dispatches and letters of that period, it is as clear as anything could be that it was the British who wanted war and not the Sikhs.

The occupant of the throne of Ranjit Singh before the outbreak of the War was an infant named Dalip Singh. Whether he was the son of the "Lion of the Panjab" is a very disputed point. The mother of Dalip Singh was Rani Jhinda. Her moral character resembled more that of the Empress Catherine of Russia than that of Queen Elizabeth of England. One of her favorites was Lal Singh. This man was made Vazir of Dalip Singh, that is to say, he was now the Prime Minister of the Sikh Raj. The British intrigued with this man, who was the virtual ruler of the Panjab and the paramour of the Queen-mother.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Sikh forces at this time was a Brahmin by name Tej Singh. This man was not a native of the Panjab but of the district of Saharanpur. He rose from very humble circumstances and was ready to do anything for "glittering gold." Accordingly the British intrigued with him and made him their tool in serving their end.

The Rajput chiefs of the hills on whom Ranjit leaned for support and who had been ennobled by him also proved treacherous to the cause of the Sikhs. Of the

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and these boats are purposely adapted for military as well as trading purposes and form part of our military means and establishment on the Indus applicable to any purpose for which they may be required either on that river or on the Sutlej, to which you may add several iron steamers which it is convenient to the Government to employ on these rivers for the conveyance of troops, stores, and supplies, and of course, available for the offensive as well as for defensive objects, not unnecessarily entering into these explanations, but stating the truth, if explanation be proper."

*The Career of Broadfoot*, p. 284.

three Jammu brothers, Dhyan and Suchet had met with violent deaths and so did Hira, the son of Dhyan Singh. Only one of these brothers, Gulab Singh, was surviving on the eve of the First Sikh War. His treachery to the Sikhs will be narrated further on.

The Rajputs, who from motives of pride practised infanticide, were not ashamed to give their daughters to Muhammadan chiefs and nobles to grace their harems as wives or rather as concubines.

When the Mughal Empire was *in extremis* we do not find Rajputs making common cause with the Marathas, Jats and Sikhs to re-establish Hindu supremacy in India. The man who treacherously captured Shivaji and brought him a prisoner to the camp of Aurangzeb was also a Rajput, named Jai Singh. No wonder that the memory of that incident rankling in the breasts of patriotic Marathas made them in the zenith of their power carry fire and sword through Rajputana. Tod, ignoring these circumstances, has painted the Maratha conquerors of Rajputana in the darkest colour possible.

So the Dogra Rajput, Gulab Singh of Jammu was only acting on the traditions of Rajasthan when he treacherously behaved towards the Sikhs. The British chose him as one of their vile tools for carrying out their designs on the Sikh Raj.

The British agent on the North-Western Frontier at Ludhiana during the last days of Ellenborough's Governor-Generalship in India was one Colonel Richmond. This officer did not satisfy his Lordship with his diplomatic skill. So Ellenborough recommended his removal from the then North-Western Frontier. He was to be replaced by one Major Broadfoot, an officer who had distinguished himself in Afghanistan and was afterwards appointed to the charge of the Tenasserim Provinces in Burma.\* But his appointment to the North-West Frontier was ordered and made by Hardinge. Writing to Ellenborough from Amballa, on November 18, 1844, Broadfoot said :

"My appointment to this situation I can not but consider as being as much due to your Lordship as if directly made by you : for to Sir Henry Hardinge I was of, course, unknown, save through your Lordship. My only anxiety is, that I may be able to do justice to the nomination. . . . .

"From Sir Henry Hardinge I have received the greatest and most marked kindness. It is to you

\* Lieutenant Colonel Havelock, in his letter to Major Broadfoot, dated Simla, September 9, 1844, communicating to that officer his appointment as Agent for the North-Western Frontier, wrote :

"...to put emolument out of the question, our North-West Frontier is the point of all others the most attractive to a soldier. You are wanted there ; for not only is our information defective, but Col. Richmond, though a very fair regimental officer, is by no means a man of calibre for such a charge, . . . ." (*Loc. Cit.* p. 215).

Major Broadfoot solicited Lord Ellenborough to be appointed to military service and Northern India, for he preferred war to peace. In his letter dated Mergui, December 13, 1843, to Lord Ellenborough, Broadfoot wrote :

"I have had some severe illness of late, but recently have had slight apoplectic attacks, which make it almost certain that I must for a time, if not permanently, quit the coast. Rest, or a change to military service with the climate of Northern India, would speedily restore me. . . . . Had my health not thus given way, I could not have ventured to make this request, greatly as Your Lordship knows I desire to serve again in the field, especially during Your Lordship's government. . . . . I could not recover if the army were in the field, and I am idler elsewhere." (*Loc. Cit.* p. 202).

This letter leaves no doubt that Broadfoot was appointed an agent because Ellenborough wanted war with the Sikhs and also because Broadfoot was considered the proper diplomatist to bring it about.

I owe it, and I felt on that account the more pleasure in it, being more generally than any one else but Durand known as *an Ellenborough man*.\*

He was chosen, because he seems to have been a past master of occidental diplomacy and also for being "too prone to war." At the time of his appointment to the above post, Broadfoot himself in the letter to Ellenborough from which extracts have already been given above, wrote, that "on our [English] side, there is in general a desire for war."

Broadfoot was playing that part of an occidental diplomatist so well that Hardinge wrote to Ellenborough on Dec. 23, 1844, that "Broadfoot is in his element on the frontier."

Even after his departure from India, Ellenborough was very keenly watching what he had described as the "game" in the Panjab. In a letter to his protege, Broadfoot, Ellenborough wrote from London on 7th May, 1844:

"Our friends on the other side of the Sutlej have been doing apparently all we could desire, or nearly so, but still, I fear, they will be alarmed by the close neighbourhood of so many of our troops, and make up their quarrels if they can"†

His Lordship did not wish that "our friends" that is, the Sikhs, should make up their quarrels. Broadfoot, as "*an Ellenborough man*", was also doing all that his Lordship could desire. The quarrels in the Panjab were evidently being fomented by the British.

From the day Broadfoot took charge of the agency on the Frontier, he was doing all that was well-calculated to exasperate and provoke the Sikhs to make rupture with the British. Captain Cunningham, who, as he states in his *History of the Sikhs*, "had free access to all the public records bearing on the affairs of the frontier," has very scathingly exposed some of those acts and doings of Broadfoot which provoked the war with the Sikhs. He writes:

"One of Major Broadfoot's first acts was to declare the Cis-Sutlej possessions of Lahore to be under British protection equally with Putteela and other chiefships, and also to be liable to escheat on the death or deposition of Maharaja Dalip Singh. This view was not formally announced to the Sikh Government, but it was notorious, and Major Broadfoot acted on it. ..."

"Further, the bridge-boats which had been prepared at Bombay, were despatched towards Ferozpoor in the autumn of 1845, and Major Broadfoot almost avowed that hostilities had broken out when he manifested an apprehension of danger to these armed vessels, by ordering strong guards of soldiers to escort them safely to their destination, and when he began to exercise their crews in the formation of bridges after their arrival at Ferozpoor."§

The author of the "Career of Major Broadfoot," a brother of that occidental diplomatist, has tried to refute these statements and assertions of Cunningham. But it must be admitted by all impartial critics and judges that that author has failed in his attempt. The above-named work is, however, very important, as the letters and correspondence published in it throw considerable light on the nature of occidental diplomacy practised by Broadfoot to provoke the war with the Sikhs.

*Loc. Cit.* p. 241.

(*Loc. Cit.* p. 307).

Pp. 297 et seq.

The then Governor-General of India, in a note on the memorandum by Mr. Clerk on the Lahore State, wrote on August 14, 1845 :

"If we are forced into war, let the rupture be caused by some prominent aggressive act. An offence to our dignity offered by a weaker Power would not be ground broad enough to occupy, ..."

Again, writing to Lord Ellenborough, on October 23, 1845, Sir Henry Hardinge said :

"The Punjab must however, be Sikh or British, ... The delay is merely a postponement of the settlement of the question ; at the same time we must bear in mind that as yet no cause of war has been given."<sup>†</sup>

It is a significant fact that while "no cause of war" was given by the Sikhs, the British were making warlike preparations which could not be fool anybody as to their intentions. As an occidental diplomatist, Major Broadfoot was trying to make every act of the Sikhs appear as a violation of the treaty, and aggressive in its nature and hence provocative of war. Writes the author of the career of Broadfoot :

"About the very time that the preceding letter was written [March, 1845], there occurred the first serious violation of our frontier. It was serious, not from the strength of the party which crossed the Sutlej without leave, but from the fact that it was a deliberate attempt to ascertain whether we were in earnest as regarded recent warnings addressed to the Durbar.

"Broadfoot was in camp at Tira, a considerable place on the old road from Ludhiana to Ferozpur, when the news reached him that a party of Sikh cavalry had crossed the river and taken up a position at Talwandi, a village near Harike Patan and not far from Sohraon..."<sup>§</sup>

What Broadfoot's brother calls a first "serious violation of our frontier" was no such thing at all, as will appear from what Captain Cunningham says regarding this incident. He writes :

"Again, a troop of horse had crossed the Sutlej near Ferozpoor, to proceed to Kotkupoora, a Lahore town, to relieve or strengthen the mounted police ordinarily stationed there, but the party had crossed without the previous sanction of the British agent having been obtained, agreeably to an understanding between the two governments, based on an article of the treaty of 1809, but which modified agreement was scarcely applicable to so small a body of men proceeding for such a purpose. Major Broadfoot nevertheless required the horsemen to recross, and as he considered them dilatory in their obedience, he followed them with his escort, and overtook them as they were about to ford the river. A shot was fired by the English party, and the extreme desire of the Sikh commandant

\* *Loc. Cit.* p. 323.

† *Ibid.*, p. 355.

Even as early as January 23, 1845, Hardinge, writing to Ellenborough, said :

"Even if we had a case for devouring our ally in his adversity, we are not ready and could not be ready until the hot winds set in, and the Sutlej becomes a torrent. Moderation will do us no harm, if in the interval the hills and the plains weaken each other, but on what plea could we attack the Punjab, if this were the month of October, and we had our army in readiness?"

"Self-preservation may require the dispersion of this Sikh army, the baneful influence of such an example is the evil most to be dreaded, but exclusive of this case, how are we to justify the seizure of our friend's territory, who in our adversity assisted us to retrieve our affairs?"

*Loc. Cit.* p. 276

§ *Ibid.*, p. 298.



to avoid doing anything which might be held to compromise his government, alone prevented a collision.”\*

Broadfoot's brother is guilty of gross perversion of truth when he says that this “first serious violation of our frontier . . . was a deliberate attempt” on the part of the Darbar, etc. That this was no such thing is evident from Captain Cunningham's statement of the case quoted above. Of course Broadfoot tried to make a mountain out of a mole-hill and exaggerated the trivial offence, if any, of the Sikhs in order to make out a case and go to war against them. His letter to the Governor-General, therefore, can not be considered to contain the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Broadfoot's treatment of the Sikhs was contrary to all usages of international law. He left no stone unturned to provoke them to hostilities. The Lahore Darbar complained that

“the British had in four instances broken the treaty of friendship. The cases cited were: that Hakim Rai and his sowars had been treated with indignity: that Lal Singh, Adalati, had not been allowed to cross the Sutlej; that the Lahore Ahlkars had been disrespectfully used; and that Suchet Singh's gold had not been handed over to the Durbar.”†

The charges of the Lahore Darbar against the British were grave. They were such as the British never attempted to refute.

The Lahore Darbar regretted and stood aghast at the ungrateful nature of the English. For,

“The Darbar had at great cost twice invaded Afghanistan for the benefit of the British. That English armies had traversed the Punjab to the detriment of its people and government, an injury which had been patiently borne by the Durbar. That we had been permitted to occupy Ferozpur, which by right belonged to the Durbar, on condition of keeping no more troops than were necessary for the management of the district, but that in spite of this, a great army was collected. Nor was this the only innovation since Col. Richmond's time; the passage of the Durbar's troops across the river had been forcibly prevented, and Lal Singh, Adalati, had been prohibited from crossing, though sent on duty by the Durbar.”§

But gratitude never formed a marked trait in the character of any Christian nation and more particularly of the English, for they are reared on politics.

The Lahore Darbar were composed of men who as Asiatics in the simplicity of their hearts credited the English with the possession of feelings of gratitude. They were not acquainted with the nature and extent of the designs which the English cherished towards the Panjab. Had the English possessed any sense of gratitude they would have strained every nerve for the maintenance of the integrity of the Raj of Ranjit Singh.

Writing to Broadfoot, from Calcutta, on 19th January, 1845, Mr. (afterwards Sir Frederick) Currie said:

“If a genuine descendant of Runjeet were on the throne, with a capable minister, or even a tolerable aristocracy out of which to form a government, it might be a question with us whether,

\* P. 296.

† *Ibid.*, p. 357.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

in return for Runjeet's steady friendship, and his forbearance from taking advantage of us at times when he might have done so with present impunity to himself and infinite damage to us, we should aid his descendant in putting down the opposition of his own army and destroying hostile factions in his country. But in the present state of affairs in the Punjab such a measure is quite out of the question. It would be madness in us to think of expending blood and treasure to bolster up the puppet Dhuleep Singh, or to set up such a government as could be formed out of the elements that now exist at Lahore, which must owe its continuance henceforth to our power alone."

The author of the "Career of Major Broadfoot" in publishing Mr. Currie's letter from which the above extract has been given, says that it

"is interesting because the writer's official position specially qualified him to express an opinion on the foreign policy of the Indian Government."

So what does the above extract mean? The English had good reasons to believe that Dalip Singh was not "a genuine descendant of Ranjit."† Knowing this, why did the British Government insist on recognising no one else as ruler of the Panjab save Dalip Singh? Of course, the English with their characteristic philanthropy were not to interfere in the affairs of the Panjab and so they connived at, if not fomented, all the disorders and anarchy in that province. But if they were sincere even in this declaration of their views, what was the meaning of Major Broadfoot's informing the Lahore Darbar,

"That the Governor-General had recognised Dhulip Singh as the sovereign, and would be no party to permitting any other successor to Ranjit." ?§

Do not all these facts go to prove that the English had their designs on the Punjab and therefore they would not recognise any one else save Dalip Singh as the successor of Ranjit? And because Dalip Singh was not "a genuine descendant of Ranjit," therefore they did not render him any assistance to maintain himself on the throne of the Panjab.

The British were not only making warlike preparations, but their agents Major Broadfoot and his assistants were intriguing with the ministers and servants of the Lahore Darbar to secure their ends. They had also their emissaries in the Panjab.\*\*

Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu, Raja Lal Singh, the minister of the Sikh Darbar, and Sirdar Tej Singh, the Commander-in-Chief of the Sikh army, were the vile instruments chosen by the English to intrigue with.

Even during the Governor-Generalship of Ellenborough, there are reasons to suspect that the English were trying to use Gulab Singh as a tool to accomplish their nefarious schemes regarding the Panjab. But Hardinge succeeded remarkably in his intrigues with that hill Rajput. Writing to Ellenborough on 20th February, 1845, Hardinge said :

\* *Loc. Cit.* p. 268.

† The birth of Dalip Singh was considered of so little consequence as not to merit report to the British till some years after its occurrence. (See the "Career of Major Broadfoot," p. 224.)

§ P. 72, Hardinge [Rulers of India Series.]

\*\* *The Career of Major Broadfoot*, p. 246.

"Gulab Singh has again written to us, delighted to enter into terms with us. The first overture was a voluntary offer of his own, through a confidential emissary. The letter I now allude to is in answer to the intrigue of a Frenchman, a Mons. de St. Amand, a great scamp, who took it into his head to go to Jummo from Loodiana, and after two days' delay, finding he could get no employment pretended he came on a mission from Captain Mills to propose an alliance with the Raja and the conquest of the Punjab. The Raja's letter by his own emissary had been previously received and rejected. The Frenchman impudently wrote to Cap. Mills from Jummo that his proposals were accepted, and the Raja has now sent us a letter entreating us to lose no time. Broadfoot will show up the impostor, and M. de St. Amand will have his nose cut off or be hanged."

Of course, the above letter is written in very guarded and diplomatic language. But it need not deceive any one save a child or a fool as to the intrigues which the English were carrying on with the Dogra Chief. The Frenchman would not have been so impudent as to write to Captain Mills, had he not received instructions from him on the subject. The Frenchman had neither his nose cut off nor was hanged. Then the whole world knows how Gulab Singh was rewarded after the conclusion of the First Sikh War. This fact alone is sufficient to prove that the English had been intriguing with him.

In the same letter to Ellenborough, Hardinge wrote :

"Our assistants on the frontier will persist in dabbling in the intrigues of the Punjab, and I fear I must withdraw—and perhaps—"

Captain Nicolson, who was one of the assistants on the frontier, intrigued with Lal Singh. Writes Captain Cunningham :

"It was sufficiently certain and notorious at the time that Lal Sing was in communication with Captain Nicolson, the British agent at Ferozpur, but owing to the untimely death of that officer the details of the overtures made and expectations held out, cannot now be satisfactorily known."\*\*

Ellenborough had written to Wellington on April 20, 1844 :

"I earnestly hope nothing may compel us to cross the Sutlej, and that we may have no attack to repel till November, 1845. I shall then be prepared for anything. In the meanwhile we do all we can in a quiet way to strengthen ourselves."†

November, 1845 was now approaching, and the English had also quietly strengthened themselves on the frontier. Hardinge had written to Ellenborough from Calcutta on January 23, 1845, that

"In the midst of this anarchy on the frontier, you will ask why am I here (Calcutta) ?

‡ "The longer I can stay here, the better our chance of keeping the Sikh government on its legs."§

As it was no longer necessary to keep the Sikh government on its legs, so Hardinge moved in the middle of October towards the frontier.

The warlike preparations of the English on, as well as the movement of the Governor-General of India towards, the frontier left no one in the dark as to the real intentions of the English towards the Sikhs. The former had done everything in their power to provoke the Sikhs to war. But the Sikhs bore everything patiently, because they

\* Broadfoot's Career, p. 282.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 305 f. 12

† Colchester's Ellenborough, p. 435.

§ Broadfoot's Career, p. 277.

were conscious of their weakness. The Christians did not find, and could not invent, any pretext yet for "devouring" their heathen ally. They had now to leave to their emissaries to accomplish that which was so dear to their hearts. These emissaries goaded on the Sikhs to violate the frontier and go to war against the English. Writes Cunningham :

"Had the shrewd committees of the armies observed no military preparations on the part of the English, they would not have heeded the insidious exhortations of such mercenary men as Lal Singh and Tej Singh, although in former days they would have marched uninquiringly towards Delhi at the bidding of their great Maharaj. But the views of the government functionaries coincided with the belief of the impulsive soldiery, and when the men were tauntingly asked whether they would quietly look on while the limits of the Khalsa dominion were being reduced, and the plains of Lahore occupied by the remote strangers of Europe, they answered that they would defend with their lives all belonging to the commonwealth of Govind, and that they would march and give battle to the invaders on their own ground."\*

In a footnote to the above, Cunningham adds :

"The ordinary private correspondence of the period contained many statements of the kind given in the text§

Captain Nicolson, one of the Assistants on the frontier, wrote to Major Broadfoot on November 23, 1845 :

"Knowing that the Durbar and our government were in friendly relation—at least, that I had never been told the contrary—and in spite of that relation finding the head of the Durbar consenting to a hostile march against its allies and those supposed to be friendly to us the most active in bringing that march about, the doubt *did* occur to one (not knowing anything of any cause of difference between the governments) whether the Durbar might not be consenting to the march of the army against us with your knowledge and to afford a chance of safety to the Maharaja and his mother and to the Ahlkar, now threatened with death by the troops, if they consent to any terms of accommodation."

Of course, as an occidental diplomatist, Broadfoot had to deny all that his assistant had alleged in his letter to him. But the denial should be taken for what it is worth. Nicolson, who from his situation at Ferozpur, must have possessed some knowledge of the nature of the intrigue between the British Government and some of the servants of the Sikh Darbar, would not have ventured to write in that manner to Broadfoot had he not good reasons to suspect that the Agent had been trying to raise traitors in the camp of the Sikhs and to corrupt their leaders.

There were some Christian adventurers of different nationalities of Europe in the employ of Ranjit Singh. These adventurers professing the Christian religion were unscrupulous, treacherous and ungrateful to a degree which could hardly be conceived of by non-Christian Asiatics. Hydar Ali as well as the Maratha princes had kept them in the service of their states.

But these European adventurers were never true to those whose salt they ate. They were even ready to cut the throats of their masters, because they happened to be non-Christian and coloured persons. Hence it was their creed not only to deceive their

employers and leave them in the hour of their need, but to betray them to their enemies.

After the death of Ranjit Singh, the military council of the Sikhs learning a lesson from the past did well in dismissing these European adventurers from the service of the state. This is as it should have been. One of these European adventurers was named General Ventura. After his dismissal from the service of the Sikhs he commenced intriguing against them. Mr. (afterwards Sir Frederick) Currie in a letter to Broadfoot written from Calcutta on January 19, 1845, said :

"I have had two or three long conversations with Gen. Ventura, ... The old Frenchman wished to give some valuable information to Sir Henry [Hardinge] to make him friendly to his interests...."

There is no doubt, then, that General Ventura rendered valuable services to the British in their conspiracy against the Sikhs. Corrupted with promises and gold of the British, the Sikh leaders played into the hands of the designing and scheming foreigners and the pretext which the Governor-General was wanting to "devour our ally" was very easily supplied. The Sikhs were made to cross the Sat'aj and the British who had been prepared to receive them (for the month of November 1845 was now over) were delighted beyond measure, for it furnished them with the *casus belli* of the war.

Broadfoot's biographer, writes that

"Both the Governor-General and the Agent, following implicitly the policy and opinion declared by Ellenborough, desired beyond everything to maintain the Sikh power in the Punjab, as the best possible barrier of British India against Afghanistan and the other Mussalman states."†

That neither Ellenborough nor Hardinge wanted to maintain the Sikh power in the Panjab is evident from their correspondence and the policy they pursued towards the Sikhs. It is anything but true then to say that the British "desired beyond everything to maintain the Sikh power in the Punjab."

*Loc. Cit.*, p. 270.

*Loc. Cit.*, p. 416.

## CHAPTER LXXX

### THE SIKHS CROSS THE SATLAJ—THE FIRST SIKH WAR

Sir Hugh Gough was the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian army on the eve of the First Sikh War. Ellenborough had no confidence in him, and one of the reasons which induced his lordship during the period of his Governor-Generalship in not going to war with the Sikhs was the fact of Gough's being the Commander-in-Chief in India at that time. In his letter to Wellington, dated Calcutta, April 20, 1844, he wrote:

"I ought not to conceal from you that the anxiety I feel not to be called too suddenly into the field is much increased by a want of confidence in Sir Hugh Gough, who, with all his personal courage and many excellent qualities, certainly does not appear to possess the grasp of mind or the prudence which is essential to the successful conduct of great military operations. He would do admirably, I have no doubt, at the head of an advanced guard."<sup>\*</sup>

Ellenborough, who even after his departure from India, was watching the "game" in the Panjab, wrote to Broadfoot from London, on 7th May, 1845, suggesting to bring up Sir Charles Napier of Sindh fame, to command the troops in the war with the Sikhs.<sup>†</sup>

Much of the disasters which befell the British forces was attributed to Gough being in supreme command of the troops. Writing to Peel, the Prime Minister of the day, after the battle of Ferozeshah, Hardinge said:

"It is my duty to Her Majesty, and to you as the head of the Government, to state, most confidentially, that we have been in the greatest peril, and are likely hereafter to be in great peril, if these very extensive operations are to be conducted by the Commander-in-Chief. These are painful avowals for me to make to you and *not* to communicate to him. I rely on your friendship to justify the disclosure of my sentiments, in a case where the safety of India is at stake. Gough is a brave and fearless officer, an honourable and amiable man, and, in despite of differences, a fine-tempered gentleman, and an excellent leader of a brigade or a division. He deserves every credit for his heroism in the field, but he is not the officer who ought to be entrusted with the conduct of the war in the Punjab. If I am afraid of making this avowal of my opinion to you, I am unfit for my present office. I respect and esteem Sir Hugh Gough, but I cannot risk the safety of India by concealing my opinion from you."

But it was not so much the incompetency of the Commander-in-Chief which accounted for the disasters which befell the British arms as the contempt which the British cherished for their Sikh opponents and quondam allies. Forming a very contemptuous opinion of the military character of the Sikh soldiers, the foreigners trusted for their success more to the intriguers and traitors whom they had raised in the camp of the Sikhs than solely to the operations of their swords and guns. § Of course

<sup>\*</sup> Colchester's Ellenborough, p. 485.

<sup>†</sup> Broadfoot's Career, p. 507.

§ Cunningham in his history of the Sikhs (p. 801) writes:

"In 1842 the Sikhs were held, as has been mentioned, to be unequal to cope with the Afghans,

their occidental diplomacy bore the desired fruits, but then the British did not estimate properly the military strength of their opponents.

The Governor-General was marching to the frontier, when the news reached him of the Sikhs having crossed the Satlaj. From his camp Lashkari Khan ke Serai, dated 13th December, 1845, the Governor-General issued a proclamation which amounted to a declaration of war—a document, which, as usually written by occidental diplomatists, abounded with lies and half truths\*. He declared the possessions of Maharaja Dalip Singh, on the left or British bank of the Satlaj, confiscated and annexed to the British territories.

William Edwards, who was with the Governor-General when the news reached him of the Sikhs having crossed the Satlaj, writes that Sir Henry

"directed me to spread out before him the map of the North-West Provinces, and point him out Delhi. I at once did so, remarking that Delhi was now far in our rear, distant from the frontier, and its importance, in a political point of view, had long passed away. 'Never mind,' replied his lordship, 'I want to see all the roads leading to it, for I have just received a letter

and even to be inferior in martial qualities to the population of the Jummo hills. In 1845 the Lahore soldiery was called a 'rabble' in sober official despatches, and although subsequent descriptions allowed the regiments to be composed of the yeomanry of the country, the army was still declared to be daily deteriorating as a military body. It is, indeed, certain that English officers and sepoy equally believed they were about to win battles by marching steadily and by the discharge of a few artillery shots rather than by skilful dispositions, hard fighting and a prolonged contest."

\* "Declaration of war of 1845, *Proclamation by the Governor-General of India*. Camp, Lushkuree Khan ke Serai, December 13th, 1845.

"The British Government has ever been on terms of friendship with that of the Punjab.

"In the year 1809, a treaty of amity and concord was concluded between the British Government and the late Muharaja Runjeet Singh, the conditions of which have always been faithfully observed by the British Government, and were scrupulously fulfilled by the late Muharaja.

"The same friendly relations have been maintained with the successors of Muharaja Runjeet Singh by the British Government up to the present time.

"Since the death of the late Muharaja Sher Singh, the disorganized state of the Lahore Government has made it incumbent on the Governor-General in Council to adopt precautionary measures for the protection of the British frontier: the nature of these measures, and the cause of their adoption, were at the time, fully explained to the Lahore Durbar.

"Notwithstanding the disorganized state of the Lahore Government during the last two years, and many most unfriendly proceedings on the part of the Durbar, the Governor-General in Council has continued to evince his desire to maintain the relations of amity and concord which had so long existed between the two States, for the mutual interests and happiness of both. He has shown on every occasion, the utmost forbearance, from consideration to the helpless state of the infant Muharaja Dhuleep Singh, whom the British Government had recognized as the successor to the late Muharaja Shere Singh.

"The Governor-General in Council sincerely desired to see a strong Sikh Government re-established in the Punjab, able to control its army, and to protect its subjects, he had not, up to the present moment, abandoned the hope of seeing that important object effected by the patriotic efforts of the Chief and people of that country.

"The Sikh army recently marched from Lahore towards the British frontier, as it was alleged, by the orders of the Durbar, for the purpose of invading the British territory.

from the Duke of Wellington, in which he urges me most strongly to look after Delhi, reinforce its garrison and watch all roads leading to it, for the Sikhs would certainly make for it and if it fell into their hands, the place would, from the prestige attending its name, become at once a rallying point for the disaffected all over India, and the result might be most disastrous.”\*

So the garrison of Delhi was strengthened.

Had there been no treachery in the camp of the Sikhs, they would have, after crossing the Satlaj gone straight for Ferozepore.

But instead of attacking Ferozepore, Raja Lal Sing, to keep up appearances with the faithful soldiers of the Khalsa, led them on, and the result was the battle fought at Mudki on the 18th December.

As a result of the treachery of Lal Sing, the Sikhs were defeated and lost heavily. But the Sikh soldiers fought bravely and like devils. They inflicted heavy losses on the British troops. There was every likelihood of the Sikhs utterly crushing the British,

“The Governor-General’s agent, by direction of the Governor-General, demanded an explanation of this movement, and no reply being returned within a reasonable time, the demand was repeated. The Governor-General, unwilling to believe in the hostile intentions of the Sikh Government, to which no provocation had been given, refrained from taking any measures which might have a tendency to embarrass the Government of the Maharaja, or to induce collision between the two States.

“When no reply was given to the repeated demand for explanation, while active military preparations were continued at Lahore, the Governor-General considered it necessary to order the advance of troops towards the frontier, to reinforce the frontier posts.

“The Sikh army has now, without a shadow of provocation, invaded the British territories.

“The Governor-General must therefore take measures for effectually protecting the British provinces, for vindicating the authority of the British Government, and for punishing the violators of treaties and the disturbers of the public peace.

“The Governor-General hereby declares the possessions of Maharaja Dhuleep Singh, on the left or British bank of the Sutlej, confiscated and annexed to the British territories.

“The Governor-General will respect the existing rights of all Jagheerdars, Zemindars, and tenants in the said possessions, who, by the course they now pursue, evince their fidelity to the British Government.

“The Governor-General hereby calls upon all the Chiefs and Sirdars in the protected territories to co-operate cordially with the British Government for the punishment of the common enemy and for the maintenance of order in these States. Those of the Chiefs who show alacrity and fidelity in the discharge of this duty, which they owe to the protecting power, will find their interests promoted thereby; and those who take a contrary course will be treated as enemies to the British Government, and will be punished accordingly.

“The inhabitants of all the territories on the left bank of the Sutlej are hereby directed to abide peaceably in their respective villages, where they will receive efficient protection by the British Government. All parties of men found in armed bands, who can give no satisfactory account of their proceedings, will be treated as disturbers of the public peace.

“All subjects of the British Government, and those who possess estates on both sides of the river Sutlej who, by their faithful adherence to the British Government, may be liable to sustain loss, shall be indemnified and secured in all their just rights and privileges.

“On the other hand, all subjects of the British Government who shall continue in the service of the Lahore State, and who disobey the proclamation by not immediately returning to their allegiance, will be liable to have their property on this side the Sutlej confiscated, and themselves declared to be aliens and enemies of the British Government.”

\* *Reminiscences of a Bengal Civilian*, p. 41.



had there not been any traitors in their camp. Instead of shot and powder the Sikh soldiers were supplied with mustard seeds and flour. Of course, it was not possible for them to fight with those.

After the battle of Mudki the Sikhs retired to Ferozsha, where a very severe battle was fought, in which the English met with disasters unparalleled in the history of their warfare in India.

The Sikhs did not take advantage of disasters they had inflicted on the English at Ferozsha\*

The English passed a very anxious night on the battlefield at Ferozsha. Writes the author of the "Career of Broadfoot"

"It is not a matter of surprise that some officers were unequal to the emergency, and suggested retreat on Firozpur:...

"In case of disaster, which was far from impossible, the Governor-General sent orders to Mudki, where Mr. Currie was in charge of official papers of the Government of India, and Mr. Cust of the records of the Agency, for the destruction of all State papers. Sir Henry's son, Charles, who was private secretary, being a civilian, was ordered off the field. Major Somerset conveyed the order, and was mortally wounded about five minutes afterwards. Mr. Hardinge passed the night with Major Brind's battery, and rejoined the Governor-General next morning immediately after the Sikh Camp had been carried. Prince Waldemar of Prussia and his suite were also desired to leave the field, but not before Dr. Hoffmeister had been killed."†

But Cunningham, truly observes :

"Perhaps neither the incapacity nor the treason of Lal Singh and Tej Singh were fully perceived or credited by the English chiefs, and hence the anxiety of the one on whom the maintenance of the British dominion intact mainly depended."††

But anyhow the English won the battle, and they offered thanks to God for their success.§

"Unholy is the voice of loud thanksgiving over slaughtered men."

The Governor-General was not satisfied with having raised traitors like Lal Singh and Tej Sing in the camp of the Sikhs. Writes Cunningham.§§

"The anxiety of the Governor-General may be further inferred from his proclamation, encouraging

\* See p. 97 of "Reminiscences of a Bengal Civilian," by Wm. Edwards, who attributes the inactivity of the Sikhs to the treachery of their leaders. He writes: "Had they advanced during the night, the result must have been very disastrous for us, as our European regiments were much reduced in number, and our ammunition, both for artillery and small arms, almost expended. It was inexplicable at the time to us why this fresh army had failed to advance and reinforce their comrades. Subsequently at Lahore, however, I was informed that their leaders had restrained the men on the pretext that the day was inauspicious for a battle, it by no means being the intention of the regency that their troops should be successful, but, on the contrary, be destroyed by the British, so as to get rid of them for ever."

† P. 595

†† *Loc. Cit.* p. 309 f. n.

§ In a notification dated 25th December, 1845, the Governor-General called upon the troops to render acknowledgment to God, and the Calcutta Christian authorities subsequently circulated a form of thanksgiving.

§§ P. 311 f. n.

desertion from the Sikh ranks, with the assurance of presents, rewards and future pensions and the immediate decision of any lawsuits in which the deserters might be engaged in the British provinces."

In that battle of Ferozeshah many eminent English officers and soldiers met with death, including that adept in occidental diplomacy Major Broadfoot.

The news of the disasters which befell the British began to be circulated all over the country. William Edwards writes that

"Rumours of the most alarming and disastrous character now began to circulate. It was reported that both the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief had been killed, our army annihilated, and the Sikhs in full march on Delhi."†

It was feared that the protected Cis-Satlaj Sikh States would rise against the English and throw in their lot with the Khalsa soldiers. Patiala was the most important Cis-Satlaj Sikh State. It was necessary for the English to intrigue with the ruler of that state in order to prevent him from joining the Sikhs. William Edwards was sent to that state to play the part of an occidental diplomatist. He writes that he received.

"the Governor-General's instructions to proceed instantly to Puttialah to install the young Maharajah on the throne, in the place of his father, who had suddenly and mysteriously died, it was feared by poison, on account of his steady adherence to British interests.

"The principality of Puttialah was in consequence of this Chief's death in a very excited and disturbed state and it was considered of the greatest importance to secure the fidelity of his son and successor, as, should the state become hostile to us, the main army's communication with its rear, which passed chiefly through Puttialah territory, would be cut off, and the results might be very disastrous. I was instructed, therefore, to use my best endeavours to induce the young Chief to continue to follow his father's example, and with his subjects remain faithful to British interests."††

With specious promises and other means so characteristic of occidental diplomacy, Edwards succeeded remarkably in his mission to Patiala.§

Two more battles of Aliwal §§ and Subraon—were fought before the English could force their passage across the Satlaj and enter the Sikh territory and proceed to Lahore. But owing to treason the Sikhs were defeated in both the battles. That

\* "*Reminiscences of a Bengal Civilian*" (p. 84)

† *Loc. Cit.*

†† *Ibid.*, p. 87.

§ "I added that although I was not authorized to say so, I felt confident that if the Maharajah and his people remained steadfast to our interests, his Highness would be rewarded by the enlargement of his territory, and by the bestowal upon him of some of the lands which would become British territory on the successful termination of the war. Finally, I said that I would take upon myself to promise, on the part of the Government, that if the Maharajah aided us by forwarding supplies, and keeping open our communications with the rear—that the present salute to which his Highness was entitled would be increased in future to such a number of guns as would not only raise his rank above all other Chiefs of the Cis-Sutlej States, his former compeers, but place him at once on a level with the great and ancient Rajas of Hindustan." (pp. 92-93).

§§ "It has been said that the descriptions of the Peninsular battles received additional grandeur from the spirit-stirring pen of the narrator, that many who witnessed them could scarcely

of Subraon was altogether a shameful affair, for the English won the victory by the sacrifice of all sense of honor, honesty, conscience and humanity. To quote Cunningham again :

"The first object was to drive the Sikhs across the Sutlej by force of arms, or to have them withdrawn to their own side of the river by the unconditional submission of the chiefs and delegates of the army, for, until that were done, no progress could be said to have been made in the war, and every petty chief in Hindustan would have silently prepared for asserting his independence, or for enlarging his territory on the first opportunity. The English therefore, intimated to Gulab Singh their readiness to acknowledge a Sikh sovereignty in Lahore after the army should have been disbanded, but the Raja declared his inability to deal with the troops, ... the views of either party were in some sort met by an understanding that the Sikh army should be attacked by the English, and that when beaten it should be openly abandoned by its own Government and further, that the passage of the Sutlej should be unopposed and the road to the capital laid open to the victors. Under such circumstances of discreet policy and shameless treason was the battle of Subraon fought."

Even William Edwards writes that, when the Governor-General was at Ferozepur, "emissaries from Rajah Lall Singh† arrived and gave us valuable information respecting the enemy's position. ... The Sikhs made a gallant and desperate resistance, but were driven towards the river and their bridge of boats, which, as soon as the action had become general, their leaders, Raja Lall Singh and Tej Sing, had by previous consent, broken down, taking the precaution first to retire across it themselves." ... §

The battle of Subraon resembled the "battue" practised in Western Christian countries. The Sikhs were the game of British officers and men. No humanity was

recognise them when dressed in the glowing language of the soldier-historian. Much has been said of Aliwal, but candid witnesses give a far different account from that written at the time.

"I wandered over the field with one who had been present at the engagement, he assured me, and his testimony has been corroborated by many others, that a fruitful imagination was at work when the official account was drawn up. His words were: "Aliwal was the *battle of the despatch*, for none of us knew we had fought a battle until the particulars appeared in a document, which did *more* than justice to every one concerned.

"But the public gulped it down, and like many of our Indian battles and Indian blunders, the final issue of the struggle disarmed criticism.

"As an Irishman would say, 'we gained a disadvantage at Budiwal, by the baggage of the army falling into the hands of the enemy, *that* no exaggeration could well turn into a victory, but shortly afterwards, a few shots, and the charge of a squadron or two in pursuit of a host of retreating Sikhs, were magnified into a grand combat, and thus the plain of Aliwal has been recorded as the scene of one of India's Marathons.'—*Wanderings of a Naturalist in India* by Andrew Leith Adams, M. D., Surgeon, 22nd Regiment. Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1867.

\* P. 324.

† Both Lord Hardinge and Sir Henry Lawrence denied that they had anything to do with Lal Singh and Tej Singh before the first Sikh war. In his memoir of Sir H. Lawrence, Kaye writes :

"If this was done, it was strange, indeed, that neither Lord Hardinge nor Sir Henry Lawrence knew anything about it. Both were men of the highest honour, and I cannot believe that either told me an untruth." (*Lives of Indian Officers*, vol. II, p. 298).

There is little doubt now, that both the above named officers told despicable lies when they denied that the battles of Mudki, Subraon, Aliwal and Ferozshah were not bought off by bribing Lal Singh and Tej Sing.

§ Pp. 99-100.

shown to the Sikhs, who were wantonly and cruelly massacred. Writes Cunningham :

"the enemy was pressed towards the scarcely fordable river, yet, although assailed on either side by squadrons of horse and battalions of foot, no sikh offered to submit, and no disciple of Govind asked for quarter...But the warlike rage, or the calculating policy of the leaders, had yet to be satisfied, and standing with the slain heaped on all sides around them, they urged troops of artillery almost into the waters of the Sutlej to more thoroughly destroy the army which had so long scorned their power. No deity of heroic fable received the living within the oozy gulphs of the oppressed stream and its current was choked with the added numbers of the dead and crimsoned with the blood of a fugitive multitude."

"Such is the lust of never dying fame. But vengeance was complete, the troops, defiled with dust and smoke and carnage, stood mute indeed for a moment, until the glory of their success rushing upon their minds, they gave expression to their feelings, and hailed their victorious commanders with reiterated shouts of triumph and congratulation."

William Edwards has also described the manner in which the faithful Khalsa soldiers were betrayed by Raja Gulab Singh. He writes :

"When the Sikhs were defeated at Moodkee, Ferozeshuhur and Allewal, the army lost all confidence in Rajahs Lall, Tej Singh, and their other leaders, whom they accused of conspiring with the British Government for their destruction, and invited Gulab Singh to place himself at their head. The Rajah promised compliance, and arrived in due time at Lahore with a large body of his own hill troops, in whom he could place implicit reliance. He persuaded the Durbar to allow him to garrison the fortress at Lahore with these men, while the Sikhs then occupying it were ordered to proceed to join their brethren on the Sutlej...Gulab urged the army not to attempt attacking the British until he joined them, and this he evaded doing on one pretext or another, knowing full well that in due time the British would attack and capture the position at Subraon."†

Charles Viscount Hardinge, the eldest son and private secretary in India of the then Governor-General by whose order or connivance the brave Sikhs who fought for their faith and their land of birth were cruelly dealt with, defends the inhumane conduct of those officers and men who were his coreligionists and compatriots. He says :

"It may be asked why such indiscriminate destruction was dealt out to so gallant a foe. The men's passions were roused. The men vowed vengeance, and inflicted it. Moreover, had not the Khalsa army been annihilated at Subraon, they would have rallied again and protracted a contest north of the river, which it was desirable on the grounds of humanity should, if possible, be brought to a close."§

Amongst the faithful soldiers of the Khalsa who died on the battlefield of Subraon fighting for their faith and commonwealth should be mentioned the name of Sham Singh of Atari. Writes Cunningham :

"But the ancient Sham Singh remembered his vow, he clothed himself in simple white attire, as one devoted to death, and calling on all around him to fight for the Gooroo, who had promised everlasting bliss to the brave he repeatedly rallied shattered ranks, and at last fell a martyr on a heap of his slain countrymen.""

\* P. 328.

† P. 104.

§ P. 119 of the Monograph on Hardinge in the Rulers of India Series.

"" (P. 327.)

The four battles on the Satlaj brought the First Sikh War to a close. The army raised by the genius of Ranjit Singh and for whose efficiency he spared no pains and no expenses, if not altogether annihilated, was mostly destroyed. Of the captured Sikh guns, the Governor-General wrote :

"We have now taken in battle 220 pieces of artillery, of which 80 pieces exceed in calibre anything known in European warfare. The weight of the Sikh gun in proportion to its calibre is much heavier than ours, and the range of the six-pounder is longer. The recoil on the carriage is less, and their guns do not heat so rapidly as ours in firing."

Had Ranjit Singh engaged in war with the English, the contest would have most probably resulted in his favor. With his brave soldiers, with his excellent guns, it is a wonder why he did not fight the English. The sack of Delhi was a day-dream with the Sikhs, and the Khalsa soldiers would have most enthusiastically followed his lead had he chosen to lead them to the invasion of the British territories. But then Ranjit Singh was no statesman and, illiterate as he was, he could not form any conception of the ruin he was bringing down on his Raj when he hugged the British to his breast and did exactly as they desired him to do.

## CHAPTER LXXXI

### THE SIKH RAJ LOSES ITS INDEPENDENCE

After the battle of Subraon, when the British treated their Sikh opponents in the most inhuman manner possible, Hardinge lost no time in crossing the Satlaj, and marched towards Lahore. William Edwards writes :

"In the afternoon of the 10th, when the action was completely over, and not a Sikh remained on our side of the river, the Governor-General returned to his camp at Ferozepore. That night when writing letters from his dictation in his tent. I remember in reply to some earnest remonstrance against the supposed folly and rashness of crossing our army at once into the Punjab, his lordship saying, 'Depend upon it I am right, for the safest and the wisest course, when you have knocked the wind out of your enemy, is to go right at his heart at once before he has time to recover.' "

Writes Charles Viscount Hardinge in the biographical sketch of his father,

"At 1 p. m. the battle of Sobraon was over. At 1. 30 Colonel Wood, hardly recovered from his wound, was riding off to Sir J. Grey's Division at Harnku to order him] to prepare for crossing the river immediately, he then rode on to Firozpur, twenty-five miles from head-quarters, to deliver the the same order, and at 5 p. m. returned half-way to meet the Governor-General. On the 13th February, the whole army had crossed, with the exception of three brigades. On the 12th. the Governor-General himself with his staff crossed the bridge of boats. Abbott and Napier (afterwards Lord Napier of Magdala) both superintended the operation."†

That adept in occidental diplomacy, Broadfoot, was killed in the campaign. His diplomatic skill and intriguing nature succeeded in bringing about the war with the Sikhs. Had he been alive, he would have been conspicuous in this march on Lahore. But his place was taken by Major [afterwards well known as Sir Henry] Lawrence. This officer was as great an adept as his predecessor in the craft of occidental diplomacy. He carried on the negotiations and intrigues with the Lahore authorities which ended in the two Lahore treaties to be referred to presently.

That treacherous Rajput chief, Raja Gulab Singh, had managed affairs so adroitly that the British marched on in the land of the Sikhs quite unmolested and without being fired on by the enemy. Hardinge also was not in a mood to fight.

The Sikh soldiers were not such a 'rabble' as they had been misrepresented by the English diplomatists. Although they had been defeated on the battlefields of Mudki, Firozsha and Sobraon, no blame attached to them for those defeats. They had been betrayed by their leaders, and it was the British who should have been ashamed of their conduct, for they who pray every day, "lead us not into temptations,

\* P. 101 of the *Reminiscences of a Bengal Civilian*.

† Lord Hardinge (*Rulers of India Series*), p. 122.

but deliver us from all evils," led the non-Christian chiefs into temptations. Those chiefs, being Asiatics, in the simplicity of their hearts could not fathom the depth of duplicity, want of scruples and hypocrisy of the occidental diplomatists and were thus made instruments for the destruction of the independent existence of the Sikh Raj.

Hardinge considered it advisable to conclude peace with the Lahore Darbar. The Governor-General knew the annexation of the whole dominion of Ranjit was impossible. Writes William Edwards:

"Annexation of the country was, with the force at our disposal, perfectly out of the question, had it been in other respects politic or desirable. This, in Lord Hardinge's opinion, it could not be, as the Punjab would never, he felt assured, repay the cost of its administration, and that of the large force which would be required to garrison it, and which being no longer available for the protection of our old territory, would have to be replaced by fresh masses of troops."\*

Gulab Singh tried to persuade the Governor-General not to advance to Lahore. But the Governor-General did not act on the advice proffered by that traitor. In his "Reminiscences" (pp. 105-112), Edwards has given a graphic account of the march of Hardinge to Lahore.

The first treaty of Lahore was concluded in March, 1846. By it the Sikh Raj not only lost its independence, but was shorn of some of its most valued possessions. But the ink on the treaty was hardly dry when a second one was forced on the Lahore Darbar. Perhaps the Governor-General was now prepared to annex the whole of the Panjab. But some pretext was necessary to lend the color of justification to his Machiavellian scheme. This was easily found in the conduct of the Lahore Darbar, at the head of which was Lal Singh. He had betrayed his own co-religionists and played into the hands of the Christians, from whom of course he expected some rewards. But when he found that Gulab Singh was rewarded for his treachery to the Sikhs with Kashmir, he cursed the British for their ingratitude to him.

Under these circumstances it is not improbable that he intrigued with the Muhammadan Governor of Kashmir to prevent its transfer to Gulab Singh. Writes Charles Viscount Hardinge in the biographical sketch of his father:

"The Shaikh Imam-ud-din, not without the connivance of Lal Singh and possibly other members of the Sikh Durbar, at last openly refused to carry out that clause of the treaty of Lahore by which Kashmir was to be transferred to Gulab Singh. Without an hour's hesitation the Governor-General declared that the Treaty must be enforced by British troops.... But the Shaikh, who had at his disposal not more than 8000 or 9000 men, saw at once that his cause was hopeless. He hurried down to tender his submission in person, and proceeded to make disclosures which involved Lal Singh in his downfall... The Kashmir insurrection and the treachery of Lal Singh led to a revision of that Treaty of Lahore, in a direction which the Governor-General had for some time been contemplating. In a despatch to the secret committee, dated from Simla, September 10th, 1846, after discussing the advisability of continuing the occupation of Lahore by British troops, he added:

"The other course which it may be open to the British Government to take, and which has

constantly occupied my attention, would be to carry on the Government of Lahore in the name of the Maharaja during his minority, a period of about eight years, placing a British Minister at the head of the Government assisted by a Native Council...Accordingly, a new Treaty was signed. The Rani was excluded from all power, receiving a pension of £15,000 a year. A Council of Regency, consisting of eight Sardars, was appointed during the minority of Dhulip Singh, and it was stipulated that they should act under the control and guidance of the British Resident.'"<sup>8</sup>

The measures adopted by the Governor-General in forcing the second treaty on the Lahore Darbar were well calculated to try the patience of the Sikhs. Perhaps it was his intention to provoke them to further hostilities in order to reduce the rest of the dominion of Ranjit Singh into a British territory. If such were his intentions he succeeded admirably. But the Second Sikh War did not take place during the period he held the office of Governor-General in India. So the consequences of the second treaty of Lahore need not be discussed here.



## CHAPTER LXXXII

### HARDINGE'S TREATMENT OF RAJA PRATAP SING

The deposed Raja of Satara, Pratap Sing, was kept a prisoner at Benares. His keeper was Major Carpenter. The Raja wrote a letter to Hardinge protesting his innocence. In forwarding this letter, Carpenter, who believed in the innocence of that descendant of Shivaji, wrote that the Raja was in a position to prove his innocence. This was so unpalatable to the Governor-General, that he severely reprimanded him for expressing his views. Regarding Major Carpenter's letter to the Governor-General Ludlow writes that

"by this letter,—for the like of which, in the case of any ordinary felon, any governor of a gaol in England would be thanked by the Home Secretary, Major Carpenter only earned to himself a rebuke from Lord Hardinge. His declaration of his belief in the Raja's innocence was termed 'unbecoming and uncalled for'. No inquiry was instituted as to the new evidence which the Raja offered to bring forth. The Raja's wife had already fallen a victim to the climate of Benares. His own health was sinking fast. In spite of Major Carpenter's warning on the subject, he was left to die. He did die, in October, 1847,—protesting to the last that he was innocent, offering to prove his innocence. With this evil deed Lord Hardinge's name is inseparably connected."\*

(Lord Hardinge's treatment of the Raja of Satara is described in detail in my *Story of Satara*.)

For reducing the independent existence of the Sikh Raj, Sir Henry Hardinge was very handsomely rewarded. He was raised to the peerage and made a Viscount. The East India Company, generous with other people's money, voted a pension of £3000 a year to him out of Indian revenues.

But Hardinge was not content with the extinction of the independence of the Sikh Raj. As he was continuing the policy of his predecessor, Ellenborough, he like him naturally had his eyes directed to Nepal and Oudh.

It is a fact that ever since the forcing of a British Resident on Nepal that country has been the scene of domestic feuds and bloodshed and murders†

"The Nepalese have a proverb somewhat to the effect that with the merchant comes the musket and with the Bible comes the bayonet."‡

We suspect that the British Residents at Nepal with their craft of occidental diplomacy used to succeed in creating these disorders. Their policy was to weaken Nepal and then to annihilate its independence. One of these disorders took place during the Governor-Generalship of Hardinge, which must have gladdened the heart of his lordship very much. Says his son :

"This ghastly story of intrigue and massacre in Nepal must sound almost incredible to the present

\* (*British India*, Vol. II, p. 154).

† *Wright's History of Nepal*, p. 54.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

generation, . . . To us at the time in India it recalled the bulletins of similar proceedings which we had been accustomed to receive from Lahore before the Sikh invasion.”\*

Hardinge also proceeded to Oudh “to warn” the King. The “game” was perhaps not yet ripe and so Oudh was not yet made a portion of the British territory.

The foreign policy of Hardinge was aggressive. He found little time to devote to the internal affairs of India. So during his tenure of office no substantial reform in the administration of the country was carried out.

Hardinge professed to be a very zealous Christian. In the *Calcutta Review* (p. 529, Vol. VIII) it is stated that

“By his own example encouraging the observance of the Christian Religion. . . The notification of October 1846 prohibiting Sunday labor is evidence of Lord Hardinge’s sincerity, and will be long remembered to his honor. The Moslem and the Hindu, who worship after their own fashion, have now some proof that the Christian respects the faith he professes.”

He took great interest in the services manned by his co-religionists and compatriots.

The European soldier’s kit, by a General Order of February 1846 is now carried at the public expense: the Sanitarium at Dugshae and the Barrack for European Artillery at Subathu are the work of Lord Hardinge.” (*Ibid.* p. 535).

When a change in the Ministry in England occurred in 1847, he resigned the post of Governor-General, to which office Lord Dalhousie was appointed. He left the shores of India on the 18th of January, 1848, with Sir Henry Lawrence and his personal staff.

\* *Loc. Cit.*, p. 156.

## CHAPTER LXXXIII

### LORD DALHOUSIE'S ADMINISTRATION

The native of Scotland bearing the surname of Ramsay but better known as Lord Dalhousie, was the last maker of the British Indian Empire proper, for after him no other portion of India has been dyed red.

This Scotch nobleman was unscrupulous in the extreme, and he believed, as an occidental diplomatist and follower of Machiavelli that the end justifies the means. But perhaps he is not so much to be blamed as his masters, whose faithful though unscrupulous servant he was. One of his successors in the Governor-Generalship of India—a compatriot of his enjoying the name of Earl Elgin, did not hesitate to declare from his place in the Supreme Legislative Council of India that the representative of the Sovereign of England in India has no policy of his own but has to act upon the 'mandate' he receives from the Secretary of State for India. Elgin was not a perfect adept in occidental diplomacy of the school of Machiavelli and Talleyrand and so he blurted out a state secret.

If we remember this theory of the 'mandate,' we shall be able to understand the land grabbing policy of the period during which Dalhousie was the Governor-General of this country.

He was not the originator of that policy, he merely gave effect to it. It was the policy of that party of English politicians of which Macaulay and Lansdowne, Cobden and Bright, were the most prominent members\* as is evident from Major General Briggs' letter to Major Evans Bell, dated 8th May, 1872, quoted on a previous page.

Unfortunately for India, the man charged with the portfolio of Indian affairs during Lord Dalhousie's Governor-Generalship was an ex-convict and an unscrupulous politician who, before being ennobled as Lord Boughton, was known as Sir John Hobhouse. Regarding Hobhouse's antecedents, it is recorded by an English historian that he was "a man of ability but wanting in discretion, who had once been imprisoned for breach of privilege."†

Such was the man chosen to be entrusted with the Indian affairs and it is no wonder that, unscrupulous as he was, he felt no compunction of conscience in inflicting miseries on the royal houses and peoples of India.

The annexations of the different independent states and territories of India during the regime of Dalhousie were brought about by means of show of force, bad faith, by the violation of all treaties, and fraud and chicanery.

Two provinces—one in the West, that is the Panjab, another in the East, that is

\* (*Memoir of General John Briggs*, p. 278).

† (*Keene's History of India*, Vol. II, p. 153, footnote 1st Edition of 1893.

Hobhouse was also Dalhousie's uncle (Sir William Napier's *Life of Sir Charles Napier*, Vol. IV, p. 298).

Pegu—were brought under the jurisdiction of England by the show of force, that is, war. Although not in chronological order, we shall deal with these two wars first.

### THE SECOND SIKH WAR

Political and financial considerations rendered it impossible for Hardinge to annex the whole of the Panjab after the First Sikh War. So after having shorn the Sikh Raj of some of its most important provinces and having imposed a very heavy war indemnity on the Lahore Darbar, to make virtue out of necessity, the Governor-General of India showed his magnanimity by leaving Dalip Singh as the ruler of a portion of the Panjab. But Dalip Singh was not recognized as an independent sovereign. No, the territory of which he was the nominal ruler was reduced to the condition of a Feudatory State. The second treaty which was forced on the Lahore Durbar was obviously intended to irritate the people of the Panjab and provoke them to hostilities. That was the policy which guided the occidental diplomatists charged with the affairs of the Panjab.

After the First Sikh War, Sir Henry Lawrence was the Resident appointed at the Lahore Darbar. Although an adept in occidental diplomacy, yet he kept up the appearances of being a very pious Christian. So it is probable that had he remained some considerable time at Lahore after the conclusion of the Second Treaty forced on the Lahore Darbar, the existence of the feudatory Sikh Raj would have been prolonged for some time longer.\* But he left Lahore and was a fellow passenger in the same ship which carried away Lord Hardinge from the shores of India.

His brother Sir John (afterwards well-known as Lord) Lawrence was appointed to officiate for him. But he was not long in charge of the Lahore affairs. Sir Frederick Currie was appointed Resident at Lahore.† A worse selection for that post could not have been made. No doubt Sir Frederick was an able man and well versed in the craft of occidental diplomacy. But he had his pronounced views regarding the the Sikh Raj. Before the First Sikh War had taken place, he wrote to Broadfoot, a letter dated Calcutta, January 19, 1845, which has already been printed on a previous page.

\* In his letter of the 29th April 1847, Sir Henry Lawrence as Resident of Lahore wrote to Lord Hardinge :-

"The national independence of the Sikh character may dictate the attempt to escape from under foreign yoke, for however benevolent be our motives and conciliating demeanour, a British army can not garrison Lahore, and the fiat of a British functionary can not supersede that of the Durbar throughout the land, without our presence being considered a burden and a yoke."

† Dr. George Buist in his *Annals of India* for the year 1848 (p. 3.) writes :

"Fully in the confidence of Lord Hardinge, and understood to be the adviser or advocate of many of the ablest of his measures, he was appointed Resident at Lahore during the absence of Colonel Lawrence, as not only eminently qualified for the office by natural talent and perfect familiarity with the whole system of the policy desired to be pursued, but as being able to vacate the Residency on the return of the late Resident, and resume his seat at the Council Board without upsetting any arrangement or interfering with the plans or prospects of any one."

From the appointment of this man there can be no doubt that the Indian authorities intended to provoke hostilities and thus to hasten the annexation of the Panjab, an object which was so dear to their hearts. But before describing the steps taken by Currie which were the proximate causes of the Second Sikh War, it is necessary to refer to some of the proceedings of the British Government ever since the forcing of the Second Treaty on the Lahore Darbar by Hardinge towards the close of the year 1846. The Panjab was not only reduced to the unenviable position of a Feudatory State, but the members of the Sikh aristocracy of that land found themselves sold bound hand and foot to the tender mercies of the English. The occupation of the aristocracy was gone, and into every situation of honor and trust, an undesirable and unsympathetic alien of the Christian persuasion was thrust. Of course this was bound to irritate and try the patience of the self-respecting members of the Sikh aristocracy. Colonel Sir Henry Steeman, the successful thief and thug catcher—and as perfect an adept in occidental diplomacy as it was possible for any follower of Machiavelli to be, knew very well the consequences that were sure to result from the policy which his compatriots were pursuing in the Panjab. He expressed his views on the subject so clearly in some of his letters to his friends that the following lengthy extracts from them are given below :

To the Hon. Sir T. H. Maddock

Jhansee, 18th May, 1846.

My dear Maddock,

Things are not going so well as could be wished in the Punjab, and it appears to me that we have been there committing an error of the same kind that we committed in Afghanistan—that is, taking upon ourselves the most odious part of the executive administration. In such a situation this should have been avoided, if possible. There is a kind of *chivalry* in this—if there is anything odious to be done, or repugnant to the feelings of the people, a young Englishman thinks he must do it himself, lest he should be thought disposed to shift off a painful burthen upon others, and he thinks it unbecoming of us to pay any regard to popular feeling. Of course, also the officers of the Sikh State are glad to get rid of such burthens while they see English gentlemen ready to carry them. Now, it strikes me that we might, with a little tact, have altered all this, and retained the good feelings of the people, by throwing the executive upon the officers of the Sikh State, and remaining ourselves in the dignified position of Appellate Courts for the redress of grievances inflicted by these officers in neglect of duty or abuse of authority. Our duty would have been to guide, control, and check, and the head of all might have been like the sovereign of England—known only by his acts of grace.

By keeping in this dignified position we should not only have retained the good feelings of the people, but we should have been teaching the Sikh officers their administrative duties till the time comes for making over the country, and the chiefs and Court would have found the task made over to them under such a system, more easy to sustain. In Afghanistan we did the reverse of all this, and became intolerably odious to the mass of the people, for they saw that everything that was harsh was done by us, and the officers of the King were disposed to confirm and increase this impression because they were not employed. The people of the Punjab are not such fanatics, and they are more divided in creed and caste, while they see no ranges of snowy mountains, barren rocks and difficult passes between us and our reinforcements and resources, but it seems clear that there is a good deal of excitement and bad feeling growing up amongst them that may be very

mischievous. All the newspapers, English and native, make the administration appear to be altogether English—it is Captain This and Mr. That, who do, or are expected to do, everything, and all over the country the native chiefs will think, that the leaving the country to the management of the Sirdars was a mere mockery and delusion.

We should keep our hands as much as possible out of the harsh and dirty part of the executive work, that the European officers may be looked up to with respect as the effectual check upon the native administrators, always prepared to check any disposition on their part to neglect their duty or abuse their power, and thereby bring their Government into disrepute. Of course, the outrage at Mooltan must be avenged, and our authority there established, but, when this is done, Currie should be advised to avoid the rock upon which our friend Macnaghten was wrecked. We are too impatient to jump down the throats of those who venture to look us in the face, and to force upon them our modes of doing the work of the country, and superintend the doing it ourselves in all its details, or having it done by creatures of our own, commonly ten times more odious to the people than we are ourselves.

Ever yours sincerely  
W. H. Sleeman

To Lt.-General the Right Hon. Henry Viscount Hardinge.

Jhansee, 15th, August, 1848,

My Lord,

It was, I think, your Lordship's intention that in the Lahore state, we should guide, direct and supervise the administration, but not take all the executive upon ourselves, to the exclusion of all the old native aristocracy, as we had done in Afghanistan. This policy has not, I am afraid, been adhered to sufficiently, and we have, probably, less of the sympathy and cordial goodwill of the higher and middle classes than we should otherwise have had. But I am too far from the scene to be a fair judge in such matters.

The policy of interposing Hindoo native states between us and the beggarly fanatical countries to the north-west no wise man can, I think, doubt, for, however averse our Government may be to encroach and creep on, it would be drawn on by the intermeddling dispositions and vain-glory of local authorities, and every step would be ruinous, and lead to another still more ruinous. With the Hindoo principalities on our border we shall do very well, and trust that we shall long be able to maintain them in the state required for their own interests and ours.

Believe me, with great respect,  
Your Lordship's obedient, humble servant  
W. H. Sleeman†

It is said that had the Multan affair been properly settled, there would not have been the Second Sikh War and subsequent annexation of the Panjab. The province of Multan was annexed to the Sikh Raj by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1818 and it was farmed out to Dewan Sawan Mall, who was appointed its Governor. § On his

\* *A Journey through the Kingdom of Oude in 1849-1850. Vol. I Private correspondence, Pp. XXXIV-XXXVI.*

† *Ibid.*

§ The physical improvement of the province effected by Sawan Mall has been borne testimony to by the Board of Administration of the Punjab in their first report for the years 1849-50 and 1850-51 upon that province. The Board wrote:

"When Sawan Mall was entrusted with the viceroyalty of the country, a large portion of it was little better than a desert, war, rapine, and general insecurity had decimated a population;

death his son Dewan Mulraj became the Governor of that province. The Governor of Multan was more or less independent of the Sikh Raj. All that he was required to do was the regular payment of the tribute to the Sikh Government of Lahore. Thus he was a renter under the Sikh Government. The revenue of Multan was 35 lakhs of rupees a year and the amount which was paid to the Lahore Treasury was seventeen lakhs and a half during the Governorship of Dewan Sawan Mall. But after the death of that Governor, Lal Singh on behalf of the Sikh Raj demanded an immense *Nazarana* (feudal fine) from his successor Mulraj. The amount of *Nazarana* was afterwards commuted to one of eighteen lakhs, which Mulraj agreed to pay within a certain time. But Mulraj did not pay any portion of the promised amount, for there was no regular Government at Lahore. He took advantage of the disorder and disorganization in which the Panjab was involved during the period which preceded the First Sikh War. On the reduction of the Sikh Panjab to the position of a feudatory state of the British, the claim was renewed and troops under the command of Lal Singh's brother, Bhagwan Singh, were sent to coerce Mulraj. The troops were defeated.

One of the districts, that of Junnak, however, was wrested from the Dewan and conferred on Bhagwan Singh.

Dr. Buist, on the authority of the *Delhi Gazette*, writes :

"Dewan Moolraj was subsequently summoned to Lahore personally to settle his accounts, and came to the capital on the guarantee of the British officers, having good reason to believe himself the object of a scheme to take his life. During his visit to Lahore a settlement of a very favorable nature to him was made, and he was again confirmed in the government of Multan. On the downfall of Lal Singh, and the execution of the second or minority treaty, which placed the whole of the Punjab at the disposal of the British Indian Government, the rights of Dewan Moolraj, so recently tacitly confirmed by Lord Hardinge, were respected. It appearing, however, subsequently, that it would be highly desirable to place the whole of the Kingdom of Dhuleep Singh on one and the same footing as to the settlement, &c., negotiations were, as we have every reason to believe, set on foot, to induce Dewan Moolraj to resign his charge,—he receiving, we presume, a fair equivalent for the loss entailed."

The above differs somewhat from the accepted official version, which makes Mulraj as anxious to resign his post as Governor of Multan. Sir George Lawrence, a brother of Sir Henry and Sir John Lawrence, writes, in his *Forty-three Years in India* :

On the downfall of the Regency and the appointment of a British resident, Dewan Moolraj was confirmed in his Government. Suddenly in November, 1847, the Dewan re-visited Lahore and communicated to my brother John, the acting Resident, his desire to resign the Government of his province. My brother endeavoured to dissuade him from the step, but Moolraj persisted in his determination, requesting my brother to keep his resignation a profound secret from the Durbar, to which my brother consented."†

which for a long period, perhaps for more than a century, had not been numerous. He dug canals, and induced the people from neighbouring states to settle under his auspices. . . . In the progress of years, tracts, for which Sawun Mull paid a trifle, yielded a large revenue." Pp. 89-90.

*Annals of India*, 1848, p. 5.

† P. 241.

It seems that the lot of Mulraj was made so hard and unbearable as to compel him to resign his charge. He had been made to surrender one district yielding an annual revenue of eight lakhs and to add two lakhs to his annual payment to the Durbar. Mr. (afterwards Sir H. M.) Elliot in his Note on the Revenues and Resources of the Punjab" dated 1st December, 1847, wrote that "the revenue which it (Multan) actually yields to Diwan Mulraj shows that his tribute is a very light one."\* According to the statement furnished by the officiating Resident in November, 1846, the total amount of the revenue of Multan as at that time constituted was Rs. 36,83,555.

"The arrangement with Diwan Mulraj is to last for only three years, of which one has already expired. If it be our policy to increase the revenues of the Durbar at the expense of the Diwan when this term expires, a question which deserves grave consideration, it is evident that an increase may very reasonably be demanded by which the tribute may be raised at a first renewal of the lease to Rs. 25,00,000 and at a second to Rs. 30,00,000."\*\*

At the time when Elliot indited his note, Multan used to pay to the Lahore Darbar Rs. 19,71,500.† Notwithstanding Mr. Elliot's statement that Mulraj's "tribute is a very light one," there can be no doubt that the Governor of Multan did not feel it so; otherwise at the end of one year of the above arrangement, that is in November, 1847, he would not have suddenly revisited Lahore and communicated to John Lawrence his desire to resign the government of his province. No, he must have also got an inkling of the determination of the British Government to increase his tribute from Rs. 19,71,500 to 25 or even Rs. 30,00,000.

John Lawrence persuaded Mulraj to reconsider his desire to resign. The latter returned to Multan and it was understood that he would retain his government for another year.

But before the expiry of one year John Lawrence was succeeded in the Residency at Lahore by Sir Frederick Currie. The new resident was perhaps a far greater adept in occidental diplomacy than any one of his predecessors. And as said before, he was perhaps appointed to the Residency at Lahore to provoke the Sikhs to hostilities and thus hasten the annexation of the Panjab. His pronounced views regarding Dalip Singh and the Sikh Government have already been quoted before.

Currie on his arrival at Lahore sought a quarrel with Mulraj. Sir George Lawrence admits that his brother John consented to keep Mulraj's resignation a profound secret from the Darbar. But Currie would not and did not keep it so, because he said that the Dewan's "resignation, so far from being a secret, was talked of in the bazars, and he had heard of it at Agra on his way to Lahore."§

In all probability there was no truth whatever in what Currie said as to Mulraj's resignation being talked of in the bazars, and if it was so, no one in his senses could or would have charged Mulraj with having made the secret a public property. Does it not stand to reason that the occidental diplomatists themselves betrayed the

\* P. 40.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 41.

† *Ibid.*, p. 33.

§ Sir George Lawrence's *Forty-three years in India*, p. 242.



confidence reposed in them by Mulraj and divulged the secret in order to gain their object ?

Of course, everything was being done to make Mulraj disgusted with his position as Governor of Multan and induce him to resign. The British Indian Government were determined to introduce into Multan that system of administration which was prevalent in the North-Western Provinces. In his "Note on the Revenues and Resources of the Punjab" to which reference has already been made above, Mr. Elliot wrote regarding Multan :

"This province has been compared to the entire Benares Division together with three districts of Allahabad and, therefore, would require for its Civil control

- 2 Commissioners.
- 7 Judges.
- 9 Collectors,"\*

Of course all these functionaries were to be natives of England over whom Mulraj as Governor of Multan would have no control, or rather he was to be dictated to, insulted and domineered over by them in every manner possible. A self-respecting and spirited man like Mulraj could not suffer such an arrangement taking place in the province which he and his father had ruled for more than a quarter of a century in a manner highly creditable to themselves and beneficial to their subjects.

Mr. Marshman wrote in the *Calcutta Review* for December, 1843, p. 241 :

"Mulraj himself had always been regarded by the British authorities, and particularly by Mr. John Lawrence, as a fair specimen of an Asiatic ruler, and Mr. Agnew remarked, on his arrival, that the quiet aspect of Multan had not belied the accounts which he had heard of its excellent order and arrangement."

Of course the people of Multan were contented, happy and prosperous under their own system of government. But the occidental diplomatists of Christian persuasion had to provide for their own kith and kin and therefore they would not tolerate the existence of Mulraj. Under the governorship of Mulraj and his father, Multan had become so rich that those Britishers, descended from the old sea-king robbers, could not resist the temptation of appropriating its wealth for themselves and they thought they could squeeze out more from it by oppressing its inhabitants than did Mulraj or his father. Elliot wrote :

"Under our management we might add 5,00,000 more for Mooltan."

So Multan was marked out as the first victim. Sir Frederick Currie did not lose any time in negotiating with Mulraj and prevailed on the Lahore Darbar to induce him to resign. His resignation was accepted and one Khan Singh Man was appointed Governor of Multan on an annual salary of Rs. 30,000. He was to be governor in name only, the real authority being vested in the two English officers who accompanied him. He was not to do anything without consulting them. The two English officers were, Mr. Agnew, a Civilian, nominated to the office of Political Agent at Multan, and Lieut. Anderson, chosen as his Assistant.

\* (*Loc. cit.*, p. 46).

† *Loc. cit.*, p. 48.

Sir Frederick Currie arrived at Lahore on the 6th of March and within one month of his assuming the duties of the Residency at Lahore the two British officers were deputed to install Khan Singh about the 4th or 5th April, and they arrived at Multan on the 18th. They had an escort of about 350 men. What happened on their arrival at Multan was very fully described in the *Delhi Gazette*, from which the following extract is given below :

"They were received with all apparent frankness and cordiality and on the 19th Moolraj went through the ceremony of handing over the place to them. Agnew placed guards over the gates, and was issuing out of the last about 100 yards behind Anderson, who was riding along with Moolraj. Whilst in the act of mounting his horse a couple of Sowars rode up and cut him down. Khan Singh, who was with him, immediately jumped off his horse and protected him from further injury, mounted him on an elephant, and conveyed him towards the eedgah outside the town, which had been assigned as their residence. They saw no more of Moolraj...Directly they got into the eedgah, the guns of the place opened on them, and continued firing the whole day. The range, however, was too long, and no damage was done, as the building was substantial...On the morning of the 20th, the Mooltanees moved out and surrounded them. Khan Singh, in command of the troops, asked what was to be done? Agnew replied, fight it out to the last, on which the Sirdar ordered the infantry to reserve their fire until the enemy came close. On these approaching, the whole escort moved out, and went over to them. Agnew on this told the Sirdars to provide for their own safety: this they refused, but drew their swords, and expressed their resolution to stand by the British officers. Agnew had scarcely time to bid Anderson good bye, when the enemy rushed in upon them. Agnew presented his pistol at the first man, the piece missed fire, but he cut him down when they were immediately both overpowered and put to death...Khan Singh was wounded by a matchlock ball, and bound hand and foot. Sir Fred. Currie received the report, under Agnew's hand, of the state of affairs up to the evening of the 19th and the rest was supplied by native news-writers."\*

Mulraj and his followers could not have helped acting otherwise than they did on this occasion. They were animated by the spirit of patriotism and love of liberty and were not going to sell themselves into bondage without resistance to the foreigners. Colonel Sir Henry Sleeman, who possessed very intimate acquaintance with the character and feelings of the natives of India, was perhaps the only Englishman in India in 1848 who was in a position to fully understand the significance and meaning of the Multan disaster. In a letter dated Jhansi, 24th September, 1848, he wrote to Lord Dalhousie :

To the Right Hon. the Earl of Dalhousie.

Jhansi, 24th September, 1848.

My Lord, \* \* \*

I hope your Lordship will pardon my taking advantage of the present occasion to say a few words on the state of affairs in the North-West, which are now of such absorbing interest. I have been for some time impressed with the belief that the system of administration in the Punjab has created doubts as to the ultimate intention of our Government with regard to the restoration of the country to the native ruler when he comes of age. The native aristocracy of the country seem to have satisfied themselves that our object has been to retain the country, and that this could be prevented only by timely resistance. The sending European officers to relieve the chief of Mooltan and to take possession of the country and fort seems to have removed the last lingering doubt upon this point, and Moolraj seems to have been satisfied that in destroying them he should be acting according to the wishes of all his class, and all that portion of the population who might aspire to the employment under a native rule. This was precisely the impression created by

\* Buist's Narrative, p. 6.

precisely the same means in Afghanistan, and I believe that the notion now, generally prevalent is that our professed intentions of delivering over the country to its native ruler were not honest and that we should have appropriated the country to ourselves could we have done so.

There are two classes of native Governments in India. In one the military establishments are all national and depend entirely upon the existence of native rule. They are officered by the aristocracy of the country chiefly landed who know that they are not fitted for either civil or military office under our system, and must be reduced to beggary or insignificance should our rule be substituted for that of their native Chief. In the other all the establishments are foreign like our own. The Sikhs were not altogether of the first class like those of Rajputana and Bundelkhand, but they were for the most part, and when they saw all offices of trust by degrees being filled by Captain. This and Mr. That they gave up all hopes of ever having their share in the administration.

Satisfied that this was our error in Afghanistan, in carrying out the views of Lord Ellenborough in the Gwalior State, I did everything in my power to avoid it, and have entirely succeeded I believe, but it has not been done without great difficulty. I considered Lord Hardinge's measures good as they interposed Hindu States between us and a beggarly and fanatical country, which it must be ruinous to our finances to retain, and into which we could not avoid making encroachments however anxious the Government might be to avoid it, if our borders joined. But I supposed that we should be content with guiding, controlling, and supervising the native administration, and not take all the executive upon ourselves to the almost entire exclusion of the native aristocracy. I had another reason for believing that Lord Hardinge's measures were wise and prudent. While we have a large portion of the country under native rulers, their administration will contrast with ours greatly to our advantage in the estimation of the people, and we may be sure that, though some may be against us, many will be for us. If we succeed in sweeping them all away, or absorbing them, we shall be at the mercy of our native army, and they will see it, and accidents may possibly occur to unite them, or a great portion of them, in some desperate act. The thing is possible, though improbable, and the best provision against it seems to me to be the maintenance of native rulers, whose confidence and affection can be engaged, and administrations improved under judicious management.

The industrial classes in the Punjab would, no doubt, prefer our rule to that of the Sikhs, but that portion who depend upon public employment under Government for their subsistence is large in the Punjab, and they would nearly all prefer a native rule. They have evidently persuaded themselves that our intention is to substitute our own rule, and it is now, I fear, too late to remove the impression. If Your Lordship is driven to annexation, you must be in great force, and a disposition must be shown on the part of the local authorities to give the educated aristocracy of the country a liberal share in the administration.

One of the greatest dangers to be apprehended in India is, I believe, the disposition on the part of the dominant class to appoint to all offices members of their own class, to the exclusion of the educated natives. This has been nobly resisted hitherto, but where every subaltern thinks himself in a condition to take a wife, and the land opens no prospect to his children but in the public service, the competition will become too great.\*

But the British Indian authorities were not honest in their professions. They wanted to swallow up the Panjab and hence they did not try to nip the Multan revolt in the bud. The Resident at Lahore did all he could to further exasperate the Sikhs and wound their feelings and susceptibilities by his very high-handed proceedings. Without any evidence he considered the Queen-mother, Rani Jhinda, to be implicated in the

\* *Loc. Cit.*

Multan affairs and took pleasure in practising refined cruelties on her. She was banished the province and kept a prisoner at Benares. It was not carried out with the unanimous consent of the Council of Regency—indeed it does not appear from the State papers that any one of the Sikh or Hindu members of that Council was consulted on the subject. In a despatch dated the 16th May, 1848, Sir Frederick Currie wrote:

“Maharanee Jhunda Khore, the mother of Maharajah Duleep Singh, was removed from the fort of Sheikhopoor, *by my orders*, yesterday afternoon, and is now on her way, under charge of an escort, to Ferozepore.

“Her summary banishment from the Punjab, and residence at Benares, under the surveillance of the Governor-General’s Agent, subject to such custody as will prevent all intrigue and correspondence for the future, *seems to me* the best course which we could adopt.”\*

The words put in italics in the above extract clearly prove that the Resident himself was responsible for the step he took in banishing the Queen-mother from the Panjab. He admitted that there was no legal proof of her guilt and that a formal trial of her was undesirable.

“A formal trial of Maharajah Runjeet Singh’s widow would be most unpopular and hurtful to the feelings of the people. . . .

“Legal proof of the delinquency of the Maharanee would not, perhaps, be obtainable.†”

Yet he added with that consistency which befits only an occidental diplomatist that “this is not a time for us to hesitate about doing what may appear necessary to punish State offenders, whatever may be their rank and station, and to vindicate the honour and position of the British Government. . . .

“I propose, therefore, that the Maharanee be sent to Benares under a strong guard,

“At Benares, she should be subject to such surveillance and custody as will prevent her having intercourse with parties beyond her own domestic establishment, and holding correspondence with any person, except through the Governor-General’s Agent.”

The Maharani was subjected to such persecutions as the followers of that creed only among whom the Inquisition was a recognised institution know how to practise to perfection. Her treatment at the hands of the British functionaries was such as was designed and calculated to exasperate the Sikhs. Currie himself wrote to the Governor-General on the 25th May, 1848:

“The reports from Rajah Shere Singh’s camp are that the Khalsa soldiery, on hearing of the removal of the Maharanee, were much disturbed; they said that she was the mother of the Khalsa, and that as she was gone and the young Duleep Singh in our hands, they had no longer any one to fight for or uphold, that they had no inducement to oppose Mulraj and if he came to attack them, would seize the Sardars and their officers, and go over to him.”§

Shere Singh in his Manifesto also proclaimed:

“It is well known to all the inhabitants of the Punjaub, to the whole of the Sikhs, and in fact to the world at large, with what oppression, tyranny and undue violence, the Feringhees have treated the widow of the great Maharajah Runjeet Singh, now in bliss.

\* Punjab Papers, 1840, p. 168.

† *Ibid.*

§ Punjab Papers, p. 179.

"They have broken the treaty by imprisoning, and sending away to Hindustan, the Maharanee the mother of her people."

Amir Dost Muhammad also wrote to Captain Abbott†:

"There can be no doubt that the Sikhs are daily becoming more and more discontented. Some have been dismissed from service, while others have been banished to Hindustan, in particular the mother of Maharajah Duleep Singh, who has been imprisoned and ill-treated. Such treatment is considered objectionable by all creeds, and both high and low prefer death."

But the Christian authorities, intoxicated with power, paid no heed to all these voices of warning. No, it was their policy to exasperate the Sikhs and provoke hostilities in order to deprive them of their independence and earthly possessions. There can be no doubt that the ill-treatment of the Queen-mother by the Christians was one of the principal causes which brought about the Sikh war.

Not only the Governor of Multan was goaded to hostility, but the Sikh Governor of the Hazara province was being so systematically ill-treated and insulted by his foreign Christian subordinates that he considered that his as well as his country's honour and safety lay in driving the English out of the Punjab. The province of Hazara, although it fell to the lot of Gulab Singh of Kashmir, was subsequently exchanged for other territories and given over to the Government of Maharaja Dalip Singh. The venerable and much respected Sirdar Chatar Singh Atariwala was appointed the Governor or Nazim of this province. His son, Raja Sher Singh, was a member of the Council of Regency at Lahore. The manner in which Sirdar Chatar Singh was being treated led him to suspect that his own ruin and that of the Sikh Raj were objects predetermined by the English. His daughter was betrothed to the Maharaja Dalip Singh. To test the good faith of the alien Christian authorities, the Resident at Lahore was asked to fix a day for the marriage to take place. Lieut. (afterwards Sir H. B.) Edwardes wrote to the Resident on the 28th July, 1848:

"He earnestly requested me to procure him an answer from you within ten days. The request seems strange at the present moment. The secret motives of men are difficult to divine, but there can be no question that an opinion has gone very prevalently abroad, and been carefully disseminated by the evil disposed, that the British meditate declaring the Punjab forfeited by the recent troubles and misconduct of the troops, and whether the Attareewalla family have any doubts or not upon this point themselves, it would, I think, be a wise and timely measure to give such public assurance of British good faith, and intention to adhere to the Treaty, as would be involved in authoritative preparations for providing the young Maharajah with a Queen. It would, no doubt, settle men's minds greatly."§

Currie's reply was a very stiff one, and it was couched in the phraseology of occidental diplomacy. He avoided giving any such assurance as Raja Sher Singh wished to elicit, but observed that

"Of course, with reference to the position of the Maharajah, *nothing can be done in this case without the concurrence and approbation of the Resident.*" –

\* *Ibid.*, p. 862.

† *Ibid.*, p. 512.

§ Punjab Papers, 1849, p. 271.

Then he added that he would

"consult, confidentially, the members of the Dufbar now at Lahore on the subject of the time at which the marriage should be celebrated."

Of course, the Christian Resident did nothing of the sort. His conduct impressed Sirdar Chatar Singh with the belief that the English authorities did not entertain friendly feelings towards the Sikh Raj.

About this very time Captain Abbott, one of the Resident's Assistants who had been appointed to aid and advise Sirdar Chatar Singh in the execution of his duties, was behaving in the most scandalous manner towards the Sikh Governor. He considered Chatar Singh to be

"at the head of a conspiracy for the expulsion of the English from the Punjab, and was about to head a crusade against the British forces at Lahore."†

Captain Abbott had at this time no reasonable grounds for suspecting the fidelity of that Chief. Yet he commenced annoying and persecuting that Chief in a manner which no man possessing any sense of self-respect would at all tolerate. He took up his residence at a distance of thirty-five miles from that of Chatar Singh, from whom he "shut himself out from all personal communication."§ Regarding Captain Abbott's behaviour to the Sikh Governor, the Resident was forced to admit that

"The constant suspicion with which Captain Abbott regarded Sirdar Chuttur Singh, seems to have not unnaturally, estranged that Chief from him."\*\*\*

But Abbott did something worse. The province of Hazara was inhabited by an armed Mahomedan population, which according to the official account was "warlike and difficult of control."†† Captain Abbott obtained influence over this population by distributing money and promise of an opportunity of revenge over the Sikhs, represented by him as the obstinate persecutors of the Musalman faith. Having thus bought over the Musalmans, he tried to pit them against the Sikhs and harass Chatar Singh. The Sikh Governor was residing at Haripur. Abbott called out the armed Musalman peasantry, who on the 6th of August "assembled in great numbers, and surrounded the town of Haripur." In self-defence, the Sikh Governor ordered the troops, stationed for the protection of the town, to encamp on the esplanade under the guns of the fort. The commandant of the troops was an American Christian named Colonel Canora. He refused to obey the orders of the Sikh Governor. He was not only guilty of gross insubordination, but loaded two of his guns with double charges of grape, and "standing between them with a lighted port fire in his hand, said he would fire on the first man who came near."§§ Some infantry soldiers were sent by Chatar Singh to take possession of the guns. Colonel Canora ordered one of his havildars

\* Punjab Papers, p. 272.

† *Ibid.*, p. 279.

§ *Ibid.*, 285.

\* \* *Ibid.*, p. 279.

†† *Ibid.*, p. 18.

§§ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

to fire on these soldiers. As this non-commissioned officer did not obey his orders, so he was cut down by Colonel Canora, who himself applied the match to one of the guns, which missed fire. At that moment he was shot down by two of the infantry soldiers.

So died Colonel Canora, who met with his deserts which he fully deserved. There should have been no pity for his fate, for his conduct was a great military crime. But his death furnished Captain Abbott with a handle to persecute the Sikh Governor. He was not ashamed to call the death of Colonel Canora "an atrocious deed," "a cold-blooded murder" and to speak of Chatar Singh having "determined upon the murder" of Colonel Canora. The Resident, Currie, however, did not agree with Abbott in considering the death of Colonel Canora as "an atrocious deed" or "a cold-blooded murder." His opinion regarding the death of that American officer will be gathered from the following extracts of his letters to Abbott :

"I cannot at all agree with you as to the character you assign to this transaction. Sirdar Chuttur Singh was the Governor of the province, military and civil, and the officers of the Sikh army were bound to obey him, the responsibility for his orders resting with him. Taking the worst possible view of the case, I know not how you can characterise it as "a cold-blooded murder" as base and cowardly as that of Peshora Singh....

"I have given you no authority to raise levies, and organise paid bands of soldiers, to meet an emergency, of the occurrence of which I have always been somewhat sceptical.

"It is much, I think, to be lamented that you have kept the Nazim at a distance from you, have resisted his offers and suggestion to be allowed himself to reside near you....

None of the accounts that have yet been made justifies you in calling the death of Commedan Canora a murder, nor in asserting that it was pre-meditated by Sirdar Chuttur Singh. That matter has yet to be investigated."

But Abbott, determined upon destroying Chatar Singh and the Sikh army, did not hesitate to adopt most unscrupulous and unfair means. In his own despatches he wrote :

"I assembled the Chiefs of Hazara, explained what had happened, and called upon them by the memory of their murdered parents, friends and relatives, to rise, and aid me in destroying the Sikh forces in detail. I issued *purwannas* to this effect throughout the land, and marched to a strong position."†

Of course Sirdar Chatar Singh had to do everything in his power to counteract the evil influences which Abbott brought to bear against him. The Resident wrote to Abbott that Chatar Singh's sons complain that their father had been

"betrayed into misconduct by mistrust, engendered by your withdrawal of your confidence from him, and declared suspicions of his fidelity, and by fear at the Mahomedan population having been raised, as he believed, for his destruction and that of the Sikh army."§

Abbott did not pay any heed to what the Resident wrote to him. It may be that Currie, determined upon provoking the Sikhs to hostility and thus justifying the annexation of the Panjab, was secretly glad at the conduct of Abbott towards Sirdar

\* Punjab Papers, 1849, pp. 313-316.

† *Ibid.*, p. 311.

§ *Ibid.*, 1849, p. 296.

Chatar Singh, but to keep up appearances he wrote those letters extracts from which have been given above. Had the Resident been sincere in what he wrote, he should have at once ordered the removal of Captain Abbott from his post at Hazara. According to the testimony of Henry Lawrence and of Frederick Currie himself, Abbott's character was not such as to place him in political situations in hours of crisis. Regarding Abbott, Lawrence wrote to Hardinge in 1847 :

"Captain Abbott is an excellent officer ; but he is too-apt to take gloomy views of questions. I think he has unwittingly done Dewan Jowala Sahae injustice."\*

Abbott also wittingly or unwittingly, did injustice to another Sikh Chief, named Jhanda Singh. Currie wrote :

"Captain Abbott wrote of Jhunda Singh as one connected with the extensive band of conspirators whom he considered as leagued to aid the Mooltan rebellion.

"Upon that occasion I explained to Captain Abbott, that if his opinion of Sirdar Jhunda Singh's disaffection rested on the facts he has mentioned, it was without due foundation ; for that the Sirdar had closely and scrupulously obeyed my orders in every step he had taken."†

Regarding Abbott's political capacity the Resident also wrote :

"His Lordship will have observed a very ready disposition on the part of Captain Abbott to believe the reports that are brought to him of conspiracies, treasons, and plots, suspicion of everybody, far and near, even of his own servants, a conviction of the infallibility of his own conclusions which is not shaken by finding time after time that they are not verified."§

The Resident was thoroughly acquainted with the character of Abbott and so it passes our understanding why he allowed the latter a free hand in the affairs of Hazara. Abbott goaded Sirdar Chatar Singh into open hostilities.\*\*

\* Punjab Papers, p. 30.

† *Ibid.*, p. 328.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

\*\* Major Evans Bell in his "Retrospects and Prospects of Indian Policy" truly observes :

"When Chuttur Singh had committed himself beyond retreat by a series of acts of contumacy and hostility, and when Captain Abbott was proving himself fully equal to the occasion, that officer's provocative policy was glossed over and consigned to oblivion. But there is nothing whatever in the Blue Book to show that the Resident ever saw reason to withdraw or modify his opinion that 'the initiative was taken' by Captain Abbott."—P. 118.

"When Chuttur Singh found that his appeal to the President and the Durbar was fruitless ; that Captain Abbott's proceedings were not disavowed, or, to his knowledge, disapproved ; and that no terms were offered to him but bare life, what could he think but that he had been marked down as the first victim in the general ruin of the Punjab State ? Already alarmed and disgusted by the Maharanee's removal and ill treatment, and by the evasive answer as to the Maharaja's marriage, his head may probably have been full of plots and projects, and he may have been intently watching the course of events, when Captain Abbott's initiative threw him into an equivocal position. When that officer was permitted to pursue what he himself called 'the work of destruction,' unreprieved, so far as Chuttur Singh knew,—when the plan of setting up Mahomedans against Sikhs, and reviving ancient blood feuds, was adopted and sanctioned by the highest British authorities, the old Sirdar's disaffection was confirmed. He was driven to desperation, he no longer resisted the importunities of the fanatic Sikhs among his followers and the troops. He plunged into open rebellion, and devoted himself to one last struggle for his religion and the Khalsa Raj." (Pp. 126—127).



It is necessary now to turn our attention again to Multan. Dewan Mulraj's revolt would have been crushed had troops been sent in large numbers to Multan in time. The Second Treaty forced on the Lahore Darbar in December, 1846, left all power in the hands of the British Resident : the members of the Council of Regency were intended to be merely his executive officers. The Khalsa troops were mostly disbanded and in their stead the Darbar was mulcted of a very large sum out of the revenues of the Sikh Panjab for the maintenance of the contingent furnished by the British Indian Government. Maharaja Dalip Singh was merely a feudatory prince and the State of which he was the nominal sovereign was reduced to the condition of a feudatory one. Both civil and military power was taken away from him and his Darbar and placed in the hands of the Resident. Marshman\* wrote :

"The precautionary measures adopted by Lord Hardinge manifested equal foresight and vigour. He did not expect that a country teeming with disbanded soldiers, the bravest and most haughty in India, who had been nurtured in victory and conquest, and pampered with seven years of military licence, would be as free from disturbance as a district in Bengal. To provide for the prompt suppression of any insurrectionary movements which might arise, he organised three moveable Brigades, complete in carriage and equipment.

These were held in readiness at Lahore, Jullunder and Ferozepore, to take the field at the shortest notice."

Yet to make out a case against the Lahore Darbar and its Sovereign, the Resident thought it convenient and politically expedient to violate the provisions of the Bhairowal Treaty.

With that unscrupulous disregard for truth which marks occidental diplomacy, Sir Frederick Currie was not ashamed to write to Lord Dalhousie :

"Dewan Moolraj is an officer of the Sikh Government ; he is in rebellion,. . . to the Sikh Durbar, and the orders of that Government. The coercion must come from the Sikh Government, unaided by British troops, if possible. If it should be necessary to move a British soldier, the affair will be a serious one for the Durbar."†

Surely, Aesop's wolf had not invented a more ingenious plea for devouring the lamb than this Christian diplomatist for swallowing up the Sikh Panjab. According to the articles of Agreement of the Bhairowal Treaty of December, 1846, the Lahore Darbar was made to subsidize the British troops for preserving "the peace of the country." Yet in the hour of need the Resident did not "move a British soldier" to put down the rebellion in Multan. Sir Henry Lawrence in his article on the Indian army published in the *Calcutta Review* for March, 1856, quoted the following passage from the first Punjab Report :

"one thousand (1,000) men (half Cavalry, half Infantry,) and two guns, put in motion within two hours of the news of a disturbance reaching any of our station, and able to traverse the country at the rate of twenty or thirty miles a day, will do more to secure the peace of the Punjab than the tardy assemblage of armies."

Commenting on the above, Sir Henry wrote :

\* *History of India*, Vol. III, p. 305.

† *Ibid.*, p. 133.

"The above passages entirely express our opinion. There is nothing in the length or breadth of the plains of India that could for an hour stand against such a force. . . . Had the ten thousand men that had been told off, on the N. W. Frontier to meet disturbance, promptly marched on Mooltan, in 1848, there would probably have been no siege, or at least the affair would have been as insignificant as it proved momentous."\*

But it was not the policy of the Resident to nip the Multan rebellion in the bud. Had he done so, the Sikh insurrection would not have grown out of it. † Sir H. B. Edwardes wrote :§

"It was my own belief at the time, that had the Mooltan rebellion been put down at once, the Sikh insurrection would never have grown out of it was a belief shared, moreover, (as well as I remember,) by every political officer in the Punjab, and I for one still think so now."

As said before, the Resident did not move a single British soldier to put down the Multan rebellion. It was not his interest and that of the British Indian authorities to have done so. The Lahore Darbar was asked to employ their own resources to put down the rebellion, and if they failed to do so, they were threatened with the annexation of their province. The Lahore Darbar tried to do as they were bid by Sir Frederick Currie. Sirdar Chatar Singh's son, Raja Sher Singh, at the head of a large contingent of the Darbar troops, marched on Multan. Lieutenant Edwardes, one of the assistants of the Resident on the frontier, raised levies of Muhammadans whose long-standing hatred against Hindus and Sikhs he turned into account, by leading them against Mulraj.\*\* He was also reinforced by the troops of the Nawab of Bhawalpur.

It is not necessary to note in detail the movements of the troops despatched against Multan. Suffice it to say here; that Edwardes obtained two victories against Mulraj's troops, and when he appeared before Multan, he could have, according to his own showing, easily taken it, for which purpose, he proposed to the Resident to commence the siege of Multan forthwith, asking 'only for a few heavy guns, and an

\* P. 186.

† Captain Trotter in his *History of the British Empire in India*, Vol. I, p. 134, writes:

"If the delay in crushing the rebellion sprang in part from a secret hope of its spreading far enough to furnish the Government with a fair excuse for annexing the whole dominions of Runjeet Singh, that excuse grew more and more feasible as week after week of the hot and rainy seasons slipped by. Lord Gough's ill-founded fear of a hot weather campaign, the Governor-General's willingness to accept the judgment of an old soldier against the bolder reasonings of a young one, the strange blindness of his Council to the true meanings of events so far away, concurred to ensure the very issues which Edwardes and Sir Frederick Currie might else have forestalled."

§ *A Year in the Punjab Frontier*, Vol. II, p. 145.

\*\* One of the Indian Mussalman correspondents of Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Sindh wrote to him in a letter dated October 6th, 1818 :

"Major Edwardes wrote to Futteh Khan Tawanah, to assemble and kill and plunder the Sikhs in Dera-Gazee-Khan and Bunnoo. But no sooner had he assembled his tribe than the Sikhs killed him. . . . This Futteh's tribe of Tawanah, is a very strong people, and always refractory to Moolraj and the Lahore Durbar. When Major Edwardes was coming from Lahore to attack Moolraj, this chief joined him, and Edwardes appointed him Governor of Bunnoo and Dera-Gazee-Khan, and he was a loyal subject and so lost his life." (*Life of Sir Charles Napier*, Vol. IV, p. 129.)

engineer officer with a detachment of sappers.\* Again he wrote in his work already referred to before :

"In June and up to the end of July [1848], I am quite sure that Lieutenant Lake's force and my own could have taken the City of Mooltan with the utmost facility, for it was surrounded by nothing stronger than a venerable brick wall, and the rebel army was dispirited by its losses at Kineyree and Suddoosam. On this point neither Lieutenant Lake nor myself, nor General Cortlandt (who was an older, and therefore a steadier soldier than either of us) had ever any doubt."†

But no British troops were then sent to the help of Edwardes. §

Sher Singh, who was sent to Mooltan, was not successful in his attempt to coerce Mulraj. The Sikh troops under him deserted him and joined Mulraj, because, as said before, they had become quite disgusted with the treatment meted out to the Queen Mother by the Resident. Sher Singh himself would have joined Mulraj, if the latter had taken him. But Mulraj's suspicions were roused against him by the false letters of Edwardes, who always professed and pretended to be a very zealous Christian. Sir Charles Napier's Indian Mussalman correspondent wrote to him on October 6, 1848:

"Edwardes has been busy, writing false letters from General Shere Singh, to fall into the hands of Moolraj to create suspicion, in which he partially succeeded and prevented Moolraj attacking him."\*\*

In the meanwhile events were occurring in the north of the Panjab which made Sher Singh leave Mooltan. Sher Singh's father Chatar Singh was being shamefully

\* Punjab Papers, 1849, p. 223.

† *A Year on the Punjab Frontier*, vol. II, p. 403.

§ The Indian Mussalman correspondent of Sir Charles Napier accounts for the raising of the siege of Mooltan as follows :

"As for Moolraj, when he saw that no British troops moved from Lahore, or the provinces, he tried another stratagem and began to play with Edwardes, and retreated after some partial fights. This encouraged Mr. Edwardes and he called for the Nawab's troops; they both closed Moolraj and shut him up in the fort of Mooltan, many people were joining Moolraj from Bhawalpoor and Punjaub, but he, I positively know, discouraged the Mussalmans and dismissed them with some promises, but he kept the Sikhs. He had always 15000 good, stout Sikhs, and was well able to crush Mr. Edwardes at any moment, but his object was to draw on some British troops. So he began to supplicate and pray for pardon and asked that his life might be spared, and his friends in Edwardes' camp gave out that he had undermined his seraglio and was about to poison himself, and Edwardes after those victories and reducing his enemy to such extremity as poison, really believed and thought himself Clive, Wellesley, and as some chose to call him, Pictou and Craufurd altogether. He did not think his glory would be complete, unless he took Moolraj unconditionally and hanged him where Messrs. Agnew and Anderson were murdered.

"But far from these, not only himself but Sir F. Currie were duped by the Sikhs and Moolraj, and when E. thought that Moolraj only held out for fear for his life, wrote to Sir F. and told him that if a single brigade and some guns would be sent down Moolraj would at once give up unconditionally. But at the same time everybody knew, ...that Moolraj was daily casting guns and had 15,000 men,...

"...The day General Whish arrived before Mooltan, he, Moolraj, came out to tell Edwardes that he did not want him to spare his life, and drove him out of his camp, and very nearly crushing him and his ally Bhawalpoor, but the Sikh allies interfered between Moolraj and flying Edwardes, and thus he was saved." (pp. 122-128, vol. IV.)

\*\* *Life of Sir Charles Napier*, Vol IV. p. 129.

and disgracefully ill-treated by the British officers. The Indian Musalman correspondent of Sir Charles Napier in the letter to which reference has already been made above wrote that

"The politicals are doing such deeds as to lose their trust and disgust the Sikhs. I am told Mr Nicholson and Captain Abbott wrote to the Hazarees, that if they will drive Chuttur Singh out, three years' revenue should be remitted."

The manner in which Chatar Singh was being persecuted and ill-treated by Captain Abbott has already been mentioned before. As the son of his father, it was the bounden duty of Sher Singh to come to Chatar Singh's rescue. So he left Multan and traced his steps northward to join his father. The siege of Multan was now raised and events to which the British authorities were so longingly looking forward, happened in the Sikh Punjab.

The failure of the siege of Multan emboldened the Sikhs and they rallied round Chatar Singh and Sher Singh to fight for their Khalsa Raj. The Sikhs are not to be blamed; for they had been so systematically maltreated, that they were provoked to hostilities. They would have been less than human beings had they not risen in arms to drive out the Christian intruders from their country. The Indian Musalman correspondent of Sir Charles Napier wrote in the letter to which allusion has been already made before :

"It is now many more times more difficult to subdue Punjab than 1846 when Lord Hardinge had the power to do so, because the object of the Sikhs then was to destroy their refractory troops, and the Sirdars accepted promises, nay took bribes, too, but now they will not take bribes, and animated with great hatred for the way they were treated, and the Sikhs will turn out to a man, unless something extraordinary may happen to prevent, which I can not vouch for at present."\*

Yes, the Sikhs as a body had joined out of their common hatred of the English, whom they would have succeeded in driving out of their country, but for the Machiavellian policy the English adopted towards them. They pitted the Musalmans against the Sikhs. It was with the support of the followers of the creed of Islam, that the English succeeded in defeating the Sikhs. Writing of the spread of the Sikh revolt, Captain Trotter in his *History of the British Empire in India*, says of the British officers that

"Left to their own resources, namely, to their skill in turning to account the old-standing hatreds between Sikh and Mahomedan, these men long stood their ground amidst the surging floods about them, with a courage all the harder as their hopes grew less."†

It is sad to contemplate the want of patriotism, statesmanship and foresight exhibited by the votaries of the creed of Muhammad that they should have allied themselves with the English in their design to subvert the Sikh Raj. The fact can not be denied that the Muhammadans in the Panjab enjoyed complete religious toleration under the Sikh Raj. Thus Mr. R. W. Traford writes :§

\* P. 125, Vol. IV.

† Vol. I, p. 134.

§ Punjab Notes and Queries, Vol. I, p. 61 :

"The principal Queen of Maharaja Ranjit Singh lived at Shekhupura (Gujranwala District), where she built a *Masjid* for her Muhammedan subjects. In a similar spirit of liberality a *Masjid* was erected at Botala *Sivala* by a Sikh Sardar."

Maharaja Ranjit reposed entire confidence in his Mahomedan minister Fakir Azizuddin. Yet members of the family of this Muhammadan minister, who, but for the patronage of Ranjit Singh, would never have risen out of obscurity, proved traitors to the Sikh Raj. His brother Nur-ud-din was a member of the Council of Regency of Lahore, and Sir Lepel Griffin in his work on the Panjab Chiefs writes of him that "he at all times was ready to facilitate matters for the British Resident." It was by his advice that the Queen-Mother, Rani Jhinda, the widow of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was ordered to be banished out of the Panjab and he personally saw to the order being carried out.\*

Of the treachery of another member of the family of the Muhammadan minister Sir Lepel Griffin writes :

"Fakir Shamsuddin, second son of Nuruddin, was Thanadar of the Gobindgarh fort during the Second Sikh War. In this position he behaved with great fidelity, and made over the fort to European troops at a time when any hesitation on his part might have produced serious results."†

What Griffin calls "fidelity" was in reality "treachery."

It is no wonder then that the Sikhs having traitors among their Muhammadan compatriots were easily overcome by their Christian antagonists.

It was not till October, 1848—when Mulraj had held out for six months—that the Sikh Sirdars of the Panjab made up their minds to join Chatar Singh and make the Khalsa Raj independent of the English. The English also were not idle. They assembled the troops and the Commander-in-Chief Lord Gough had to take the field. The siege of Multan had been raised in September, 1848. But the British troops again invested it. The fort of Multan was a strong one and considered quite impregnable. Sir Charles Napier writing in August, 1848, to his brother Major-General W. Napier said :

"If he (Lt. H. B. Edwardes) beats Moolraj, he will be safe, but if Moolraj gets an advantage Edwardes' position will be dangerous, . . . If Moolraj's men are true, Edwardes can not take Mooltan, if they are false the town will open its gates."§

So it was not altogether the sword on which the English depended for success in their campaign against the Sikhs. Occidental diplomacy was the more useful weapon to insure their success than military strategy or mere powder and shot.

It is not necessary to enter into details regarding the battles which were fought between the English and the Sikhs—the battles of Ramnagar, Chilianwala and Gujarat. Gough was outmanouvred by Sher Singh and the British forces were defeated by the Sikhs at Chilianwala. This battle was the last one won by the Sikh soldiers on the plains of India.¶ It was fought in January 1849. But unfortunately the Sikhs did not

\* Punjab Papers, 1849, p. 228.

† *The Punjab Chiefs*, new (1890) Edition. Vol. I, p. 1109.

§ *Life of Sir Charles Napier*, Vol. IV, p. 106.

¶ Marshman writing of the battle of Chilianwala, says that it was "one of the most disastrous

take full advantage of it. Of course, the Sikh soldiers were the best fighting men in the world. Marshman in his article on the Second Panjab War, published in the *Calcutta Review* for December, 1849, wrote :

"Throughout the war, at Ramnuggur, at Chillianwallah, at Russul, at the passage of the Indus, the Sikh army waited for, escaped from or moved round the British, with the most perfect facility, crossed rivers, which occupied British troops many days, and in every imaginable mode, demonstrated that the excellence of the British Commissariat was no match for the simplicity of the Sikh, and that men, who can bivouac in the open air, and live on parched grain will march much faster than those who must have double tents, and carry their luxuries with them."\*

Sher Singh should not have left his intrenched position at Rasul, in the immediate neighbourhood of Chilianwala, where he had taken up his quarters after that memorable victory. Writes Marshman .

The Commander-in-Chief rode over the ground, which the Sikhs had vacated, and the intrenchments which they had thrown up, and which it would have cost thousands of lives to capture. But the men and the cannon which should have defended them, were gone, and it became manifest that the Sikh army of 30,000 men, with sixty guns, all lying within four miles of the British encampment, had marched round the army of the Punjab, had escaped the eyes of its Commander-in-Chief, and was now in his rear, in full march for Lahore."†

But Sher Singh could not reach Lahore, and was intercepted at Gujrat, where took place the last fight which crushed all hope of Sikh independence. The military strategy of the English at Gujrat was faulty. Writing of this, Sir Charles Napier said :

"Grant and Lawrence are good men in their position and if we had a war I would put Grant at the head of a division, but neither of them are generals. Grant would be, if he had studied war, but he has not. The battle of Gujrat was his, and marked by a total absence of science. The Sikh army, not a manoeuvring army able to change front in action, whose left rested on an impassable river, whose right was 'en l'air, and weak as water, whose front was strong, ought to have been attacked on its right, and the more especially that its only line of retreat was through a pass on the right, and a rapid movement of our left, when winning, would have gained that pass, and driven the Sikhs into the river, the fords of which were guarded by us on the left bank, it was an adjutant-general's battle, not a scientific one."‡

Regarding Sher Singh's mistake, Napier wrote :

"His (Sher Singh's) position would have been very strong indeed had he made Goojerat the

engagements we have ever fought in India—an engagement, by which no one advantage was gained, and in which British troops were checked by a barbarian enemy who had not even the advantage of numbers . . . .

"Our loss amounted to no less than 2,300 killed and wounded, of whom nearly 800 were slain. Twenty-six officers were killed on the spot, or died of their wounds, sixty-six were wounded. Her Majesty's 24th and the 30th and 56th native infantry were so entirely disabled, that they were compelled to be disjoined from the force, and sent back to Ramnuggar and Lahore. Her Majesty's 20th and the 24th native infantry lost both their colours, the 25th and 26th lost each one, the 5th cavalry, lost the colour they won on the field of Maharajpore." (*Calcutta Review*, December, 1849, p. 286).

\* Pp. 267-268.

† *Ibid.*, p. 287.

‡ Vol. IV, p. 282.

front of his centre, instead of a support a mile in rear : that, or gone in rear of the pass altogether."\*

Again he wrote :

"I told Shere Sing he should have fortified Goojerat as the centre of his position instead of having it a mile in his rear, he said he had no power to do what he wished, the other Chiefs overruled him...He said his plan was to cross the Chenab and march on Lahore, and he evidently thought that Goolab Sing would then have joined him : indeed Lord Dalhousie told me he had proofs that such was Goolab's design when opportunity offered. The plan appears to me excellent and had the people risen in Gough's rear the old Chief would have been in a devil of a plight."

It is not improbable that there was some treachery in the camp of Sher Singh which made him lose the battle of Gujrat and surrender himself and the Sikh troops unconditionally to the English.

At Multan also, Dewan Mulraj had to surrender himself, after a gallant resistance of nine months, unconditionally to the English. He could not hold out any longer, for he ran short of provisions and powder and shot, his magazine having caught fire and being destroyed.

Thus ended the Second Sikh War in which the Sikhs fought very bravely, but had at last to surrender themselves to the English. Their national independence became a thing of the past and in after years they became servile followers of their masters.

## CHAPTER LXXXIV

### ANNEXATION OF THE PANJAB

It has been said before that political and financial considerations made it impossible for Lord Hardinge to annex the whole of the Panjab after the First Sikh War. But the second or the Bhairawal Treaty, as it is called, which his lordship forced on the Lahore Darbar was worse than annexation of the land of the five rivers to the British territories. That treaty was intended to provoke hostilities, and then the appointment of Sir Frederick Currie as Resident, who had no love for Dalip Singh or the Khalsa Rai, was made with the secret object of exasperating the Sikhs, of goading them to war and of finally annexing their country. The English animated by that precept of Jesus which declared, "Do unto others," etc., were clamorous for devouring the remnant of the Kingdom of Runjit Singh. This is evident from the letters addressed to the Governor-General of India (Lord Dalhousie), by "Economist," an officer of practical experience in the Panjab.\* Just after the surrender of Dewan Mulraj at Multan, this officer addressed the first of his letters to Dalhousie, in which he advised his lordship to annex the Panjab. He wrote:

"The arguments in favour of annexation of the Punjab are rather negative than positive—rather that no one can devise any other *possible* plan than that the acquisition itself is desirable."

In the above sentence is struck the keynote of all his arguments for the annexation. He did not stop to consider whether such a measure was just or not. But he proceeded and said:

"The question now to be decided is no matter of petty policy—no mere affair of Duleep Singh or Sir Frederick Currie, nor even a purely *Sikh* question ... But it is now for you, my Lord, to fix the permanent limits of our Indian Empire. ... A lasting line of demarcation must be drawn, permanent land marks must be set up, and then, having disposed of our external defences, we may turn to internal management, and do what we have never yet done—make the country *pay*."

It was on these grounds that this officer told Dalhousie to

"Hold it (Punjab) for good, or give it up for ever."

To keep the people of the Panjab in subjection, he advised his lordship to grind them to poverty, place the iron heel on their necks and rule them without any show of justice or mercy. He wrote:

"Do not buy the consent of such people to a 'treaty of annexation.' Take a more straightforward and wiser course. In regard to those who have really some claim to be considered the *nobility* of the country, Sikh Chiefs, and Jagheer-possessing sodies, gooroos, &c.,—I would only say, keep them down as much as possible. A well satisfied and *unimpovertised* nobility may be all very well to European notions, but, if we are to rule in Asia, we are much better without them....Such people

\* These letters were reprinted and published by the "Sun" printing press at Lahore in 1897. "Economist" was Sir George Cambell, who rose to be the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.



should be reduced to a reasonable subsistence, so that they may neither be driven entirely desperate, nor retain more than is good for them and for us."

This was no doubt a counsel of perfection, on which it is needless to say that the Christian Government of India in those days always acted not only in the Punjab, but in other parts of India also.

The same writer pointed out the advantages of annexation as follows:

i. It is easier (and especially so in India where the principle of passive obedience to the powers that be is so universal) to hold in check *disarmed* than an armed people.

ii. A considerable force must always be maintained on the frontier of India. If this force occupies the Punjab the revenues of that country are available as an offset to meet a portion of the expense...

iii. By taking the Punjab we arrive at the natural boundaries of India, and obtain a final settlement of the question.

iv. We shall be enabled to establish a sure defence against the hordes of Central Asia and the Russians, or any one else who may have an eye to the East...

v. Independent of the expense and anxiety of always keeping an army in the field east of the Sutlej, we have, as a question of humanity, to choose between a state of continual war and a secure peace...

vi. ... If we do not keep the Punjab—what then? We must abandon the country and retire—our prestige will be ruined and our name will lose its spell. We shall have commenced a backward career. Is any one prepared to advocate this? I believe that it is impossible...

"...The Punjab must henceforth be held by British troops, and by British troops alone. The occupation must be complete as to manner—no *concurrent*, but an *exclusive* possession—complete as to place—of no *portion* of the country, but of *the whole*—complete as to time—for no term of years, but for a *permanency*."

He did not advise Dalhousie to repeat the experiment of Hardinge, the experiment of a double government in the Panjab. It must be admitted that there was some truth in his arguments. He wrote:

"There is nothing on which so much depends as the feeling of self-responsibility. If the natives are left to themselves, they feel that every thing rests with themselves, and they are not altogether depraved. Take away this feeling—support them with a military force—interfere vexatiously in their civil system—and they become but the corrupt instruments of a corrupt system." They lose all power of doing good, and but apply their remaining strength to do unmitigated evil for their own sordid and selfish ends. I utterly deny the *possibility* of a respectable native Government supported by our troops and over-ridden by our Politicals. . . . The natives cannot consider themselves the rulers of the country. . . .

"The people of the country would not feel themselves thoroughly our subjects. They would be exposed to the evils of either system, they would be serving two masters. Unquiet and uncertainty must prevail, and all progress be much retarded."

But the strongest argument that he advanced for annexation of the Panjab was that might is right. He wrote:

"People begin to discover that, in a country where from time immemorial might is right, we having the greatest might have also the best right. . . . it has become our duty as well as our right to hold."

Another argument which this officer urged in favour of annexation was that the continuance of the Sikh Raj would go against the interests of the Muhammadan

population of the Panjab, because they assisted the English against the Sikhs and so the latter would make short work of them. He wrote :

"After having stirred them (the frontier Musalman tribes) up to rebel against the Sikhs unassisted by our troops, how we are to persuade them to receive as the price of their exertions a yet heavier yoke, I don't know. Abbott's Hazarehs and Edward's Pathans can hardly consider themselves to be fighting merely on our account. They look on it as an opportunity of regaining their inheritance."

Of course, Dalhousie was for annexation. Wrote the Christian officer :

"I believe that your first thoughts were for annexation."

But Henry Lawrence, who had returned and resumed charge of the Lahore Residency from Sir Frederick Currie in the beginning of January, 1849, was opposed to annexation. Wrote this Christian officer :

"I understand, however, that Sir Henry Lawrence is opposed to it. Now, I would not for a moment be supposed to impugn the purity of that gentleman's motives, but I beg of you to remember that not only was he a principal artificer in the settlement which has just broken down, but under present arrangements he is King of the Punjab. As then, human nature is but human nature, you must regard Sir Henry not so much as an unbiassed adviser as a potentate pleading his own cause. ...

"To another opinion of Sir Henry's I would not be so tolerant. It is said that he has come back to declare that the 'Sikhs had been exceedingly ill used' and that if he had stayed there would have been nothing of the kind. Now this is, really, too much. ...

"Altogether, I think that if Sir H. Lawrence says that the Sikhs were ill used after his departure, the charge is ungrateful and unfair."

Of course, this Christian officer considered the Treaty existing between the Christians and the Sikhs as so much waste paper. For, he wrote :

"I am glad to find that the treaty seems to have died a natural death. No argument is hinged on *that* pretext, and the tenderest conscience may, therefore, throw over that consideration without fear of offence. In fact, '*the Sikhs*' neither made the treaty nor broke it. The few individuals who went through the farce of consent were nominees of the British power. Duleep Sing was a mere piece of paper money, and is now as valueless as a note when the bank has broken."

The natives of England were afraid to annex the Panjab, because it was inhabited by martial tribes who might give trouble to their Christian rulers. Against this argument the Christian officer wrote :

"After all, *fear* is the prevailing argument against annexation. The *Times* talks of the martial tribes commencing with the Sutlej. But *you* are not 'afraid' ! ...

"But annex, if things are managed by people who understand them, the country will assume exactly the same phase as the Cis-Sutlej territory—"

"The broad fact remains, that in our own important possessions serious rebellion has throughout our history in India been *unknown*. Will you, then—can you, in the face of this all-powerful fact—give way to imaginary fear ? ...Annexation will bring safe and lasting peace."

Such were the arguments of this sagacious Christian officer for annexing the Panjab. And when Dalhousie annexed that province he wrote his last letter in which he heartily congratulated his lordship.

On the 29th March, 1849, his lordship issued a proclamation tolling the death-knell of the Sikh Raj.

Again, in his farewell minute, dated the 28th of February, 1856, Dalhousie, with that unscrupulous disregard for truth which characterises occidental diplomacy, wrote :

"The murder of the British officers at Mooltan, and the open rebellion of the Dewan Moolraj, were not made pretext for quarrel with the Government of Lahore....The Sikhs themselves were called upon to punish Moolraj as a rebel against their own sovereign, and to exact repaiaion for the British Government whose protection they had previously invoked.

"But when it was seen that the spirit of the whole Sikh people was inflamed by the bitterest animosity against us—when Chief after Chief deserted our cause, until nearly their whole Army, led by Sirdars who had signed the treaties, and by members of the Council of Regency itself, was openly arrayed against us—when above all, it was seen that the Sikhs, in the eagerness for our destruction, had been combined in unnatural alliance with Dost Mahomed Khan and his Mahomedan tribes—it became manifest that there was no alternative left. The question for us was no longer one of policy or of expediency, but one of national safety.

"Accordingly, the Government put forth its power. After a prolonged campaign, and a struggle severe and anxious, the Sikhs were utterly defeated and subdued, the Afghans were driven with ignominy through the mountains, and the Punjab became a British province."

But that the annexation of the Panjab cannot be justified from moral considerations will be admitted by all unbiased and fair-minded men. Regarding this annexation, Major Evans Bell truly observes :

"Lord Dalhousie's procedure in settling the future relations of the Punjab with British India after the campaign of 1849, just amounts to this : a guardian, having undertaken, for a valuable consideration, a troublesome and dangerous trust, declares, on the first occurrence of those troubles and dangers, of which he had full knowledge and fore-warning, that as a compensation for his exertions and a protection for the future, he shall appropriate his Ward's estate and personal property to his own purposes. And this, although the guardian holds ample security in his own hands for the repayment of any outlay, and the satisfaction of any damages he might have incurred, in executing the conditions of the trust.""

The same author has very scathingly exposed the untruthful character of the statements contained in Dalhousie's proclamation. Extracts from his writings are given below. He writes :

"During the period prescribed by the Treaty for the Maharaja's minority, no crisis, no second struggle, could absolve the British Government from the obligations of guardianship and management, so long as it professed to fulfill those duties, and was able to do so without interruption.

"...supposing the rebellion had not been in the slightest degree provoked or extended by any error, excess, omission, or delay of the British Government,—Lord Dalhousie's case would not be in the least improved. Supposing that the surmise by which he attempted to justify the annexation, were demonstrably true, and that the Sikhs were really animated, from the first day of the occupation, with so deep and bitter a hostility, that they only watched their opportunity for revolt, and would never have been pacified without a second lesson, then I say that they were entitled to that second lesson, without any extra charge. The State of Lahore had paid heavily in money, and in territory, for the first lesson, and we had undertaken, in consideration of an annual subsidy, secured on the public revenues administered by ourselves, to perform the office of teacher for a term of years. If unexpected difficulties had presented themselves in the performance of this office, we should even then, have had no right to complain. But it was not so. We understood quite well the nature of the evils to encounter and cure, and they were clearly aggravated by our own malpractice."

"The continued existence of this Regency, throughout the rebellion, proves that British responsibility and guardianship were never shaken off or shifted for a day. If indeed the British Resident had been driven from his position at Lahore, if he had lost the custody of the Maharajah's person, if he had been forced to abdicate for a time the functions of government, and the Ward had thrown off his tutelage, the guardian might have been justified in re-entering the country as a conqueror, and declaring all previous engagements to be at an end. But no such interruption ever took place. The Resident's authority as chief ruler of the Punjab was never suspended. During the rebellion, which in Lord Dalhousie's opinion warranted him in dethroning his Ward, the capital city was never disturbed, and the Government of the Punjab, exactly as we had chosen to organise it,—including the Council of Regency,—was unaltered to the last....

"Lord Dalhousie totally fails to make out any violation of the Treaty against the Lahore State,—the only specific instance he adduces, the non-payment of the subsidy, being, as we have seen a mere matter of account, by which the case is not modified to the prejudice of the State of Lahore. He contrives to fasten a plausible stigma of perfidy and violation of treaties upon the State of Lahore, only by ringing the changes through several paragraphs, upon the terms, 'the Sikh nation,' 'the Sikhs,' 'the Sikh people,' and 'the Government,' or 'State of Lahore,' until a thorough confusion is established. For these are not convertible terms.

"The Sikh people,' . . . is not a phrase synonymous with 'the people of the Punjab,' the great majority of whom took no share in the revolt, and felt no sympathy with it, while at least 20,000 subjects of the Lahore State, enrolled in its service, fought on the side of the Government, and assisted in suppressing the rebellion.

"It is strange that Lord Dalhousie should have so completely overlooked the real difference between 1846 and 1849. The question of age was immaterial at both periods. There was no plea of annexation in 1846 when the warning was given and acknowledged, because the Maharajah was the reigning Prince of an independent state. In 1849 the actual ruler of the state was the British Resident, under the Governor-General's instructions....

"From the 16th of December, 1846, the date of the treaty of Bhyrowal, down to the 29th of March, 1849, when the Proclamation annexing the Punjab was issued, the Government of Lahore was in strict subordination to the British Government, and its subordination was never interrupted, suspended, or relaxed for a single day. If, indeed, the Government of Lahore could justly have been made responsible for any of the untoward events in 1848 and 1849, Sir Frederick Currie, the Resident, must have been the first person indicated, for he was the absolute head of that Government...."

Of course, the annexation could not be justified from any moral considerations. But then "the official wolves," with whom "the pretext of the muddied stream was always nigh at hand—" wolves like Dalhousie and his adviser Frederick Currie, had bidden farewell to the dictates of their conscience, if they ever possessed one, and were not to be swayed by any moral considerations. There is very little doubt that Lord Dalhousie was assisted by Sir Frederick Currie in drawing up the Proclamation of the 29th March, 1849, sealing the doom of the Sikh Raj.

One important reason for the annexation of the Panjab was that it grew cotton. That had been a reason for the annexation of Sindh also.

## CHAPTER LXXXV

### THE SECOND BURMESE WAR

The Second Burmese War was a wanton outrage on humanity, for there was no *casus belli* for it. With that unscrupulous disregard for truth which characterises Lord Dalhousie's state documents, he did not blush to write in his farewell Minute the following as justifying the war :

"When little more than two years had passed [after the Sikh War], the Government of India again was suddenly engaged in hostilities with Burmah.

"Certain British traders in the Port of Rangoon had been subjected to gross outrage by the officers of the King of Ava, in direct violation of the Treaty of Yandaboo. . . .

"Of all the Eastern nations with which the Government of India has had to do, the Burmese were the most arrogant and overbearing. . . .

"However contemptible the Burman race may seem to critics in Europe, they have ever been regarded in the East as formidable in the extreme. Only five and twenty years before, the news of their march towards Chittagong had raised a panic in the bazars of Calcutta itself, and even in the late War, a rumour of their supposed approach spread consternation in the British Districts of Assam and Arracan. . . .

"Every effort was made to obtain reparation by friendly means. . . . But every effort was vain. . . .

"But our forbearance was fruitless. Accordingly, in the end of 1852, the British troops took possession of the Kingdom of Pegu, and the territory was retained, in order that the Government of India might hold from the Burman State both adequate compensation for past injury and the best security against future danger."

It is proper to say that the above is a tissue of falsehoods which occidental diplomatists know how to resort to to suit their convenience and purpose. Three years before Dalhousie penned his minute, Cobden had very scathingly exposed the immorality and injustice of the Burmese War in a publication which he very aptly named, "How Wars are got up in India." No attempt was made by Dalhousie to controvert or deny the serious allegations made against the Indian Government by Cobden. Cobden's is a name held sacred in almost every house-hold in England, for if the natives of that country to-day are enabled to get their bread cheap, it is not to a small measure due to the exertions of that English statesman. If the Englishman reveres his memory as that of a patriot, the Indian should look upon him as a philanthropist, for he tried to do justice to India.

It is a pity that none of the Christian writers of Indian history or of the biography of Lord Dalhousie has ever referred to Cobden's pamphlet on the Second Burmese War. Mr. F. W. Chesson in his note to the pamphlet says that this

"pamphlet was written in the summer of 1853, nearly three years before the late Lord Dalhousie, then Governor-General of India, had terminated the career of violence and spoliation which dazzled the nation by the meretricious lustre of its successes, but which, to the prescient eye of Mr. Cobden, who saw with painful clearness its injustice and immorality, was fraught with the greatest peril to the Empire. . . . Mr. Cobden lost no time in disintombing the facts from the same official burial-ground

[that is, Parliamentary papers], and with a result which will entitle his searching exposure of deeds that will not bear the light to the thoughtful consideration of all Englishmen who desire to make themselves acquainted with the true history of Indian misgovernment."

In the preface to his pamphlet, Mr. Cobden wrote :

"I may say, by way of explanation, that the whole of the narrative is founded exclusively upon the Parliamentary papers, . . . It should be borne in mind that the case, such as it is, is founded upon our own *ex parte* statement. A great many of the letters are mutilated : and, remembering that, in the Afghan papers, it is now known that the character of at least one of the Cabool Chiefs was sacrificed by a most dishonest garbling of his language, I confess I am not without suspicions that a similar course may have been pursued in the present instance. I will only add, then, bad as our case now appears, what would it be if we could have access to the Burmese "Blue Books," stating their version of the business ?"

The stay-at-home English as well as Anglo-Indian writers on the Second Burmese War have tried to blame the Government of Burma for having provoked the war by their insolence and ill-treatment of British subjects trading in that country. Thus the historian of the Second Burmese War, one Lieut. W. F. B. Lawrie, says (p. 20) :

"Latterly, our merchants at Rangoon, contrary to the stipulations of the treaty [of Yandaboo], were subjected to a series of oppressions and exactions, which, if unredressed, must have obliged us to quit the port....

"It is unnecessary to enter into a detail of all the insults heaped upon us by the Burmese. Suffice it to mention one case of injustice and oppression, that of a British captain of a vessel, who, on the false representation of a Burmese\* pilot, was placed by the governor of Rangoon in the stocks, and fined nine hundred rupees."

The facts which brought about the war with the Burmese have been very carefully set forth by Mr. Cobden in the pamphlet referred to above and which is compiled from Parliamentary papers. The opening sentence of his pamphlet is that

"In June, 1851, the British barque *Monarch*, of 250 tons, last from Moulmein, reached Rangoon, the principal port of the Burmese Empire. On the second day after their arrival, Captain Shepperd the master and owner, was taken before the police to answer the charge of having, during the voyage, thrown overboard the pilot Esoph, preferred by a man named Hajim, a native of Chittagong, who stated that he was brother of the said pilot'...."†

"Captain Shepperd was mulcted in fines and fees to the amount of £46, and permission was then given him to depart ; but when about to sail he was again detained, 'owing to a charge brought by a man named Dewan Ali (a British subject, employed in one of the Moulmein gunboats), calling himself a brother of the pilot, bringing forward a claim for a sum of 500 rupees, which he stated his brother had taken with him.'§ This led to a fresh exaction of £55...."

Captain Lewis of the British vessel the *Champion*, which in August, 1851, arrived at Rangoon, from the Mauritius was mulcted by the governor in fines and fees to the amount of £70. The charges of murder and other offences were preferred against Captain Lewis by two Bengali coolies, who had secreted themselves on board his ship, with a view to return to their country and they were joined by some *lascars* and others of the crew, who deserted.

\* The pilot was not a Burmese, but a British Indian subject as will be mentioned presently.

† Papers relating to hostilities with Burmah presented to Parliament, June 4, 1852, p. 5.

§ *Ibid.*

Cobden remarks and he has put in italics his remarks (p. 30. Edition of 1867) that

*"It must be borne in mind that all the parties to these suits were British subjects ; the governor of Rangoon had not been adjudicating in matters in which Burmese interests, as opposed to those of foreigners, were at stake."*

But the two gallant captains in order to furnish the Christian Government of India with a handle to proceed against Burma—knowing that any complaint against any independent power of the East would be quite welcome to the British Indian authorities, appealed to the Indian Government for redress. Although they claimed together £1,920, as compensation for ill-usage, etc., their claim was cut down by the Indian authorities to £920, that is, in the case of Captain Shepperd of the barque *Monarch*, Rs. 3500 and of the *Champion* Rs. 5600. A demand was made of the Burmese government for the payment of these sums as compensation for losses sustained by the two above-mentioned officers. For our own part, we fail to see how according to any International Law, the Government of India could sit in appeal over the decisions of the court of any other independent country. But Burma was weak and the pretext of the muddled stream was necessary to the wolves of Anglo-India to swallow up that country.

The Government of India took up the complaint with great alacrity and eagerness. Two of the Queen's ships, the *Fox* and the *Serpent*,\* under the command of Commodore Lambert were lying in the Hughli. Dalhousie lost no time in despatching Commodore Lambert to Rangoon to demand reparation, that is, the payment of £920, of the Burmese authorities for the injuries sustained by Captains Shepperd and Lewis.

Before proceeding further it is necessary to state here that Dalhousie made a mistake† in entrusting Commodore Lambert with this diplomatic affair. Sir William Lee-Warner in his Life of Lord Dalhousie writes :

"As to the policy of the step taken by the Government of India, John Lawrence in a letter to Courtenay, the private secretary, asked, "Why did you send a Commodore to Burma if you wanted peace?"§

Dalhousie also in a letter to his uncle, Lord Broughton, wrote on the 23rd of January, 1852, that "these Commodores are too combustible for negotiations."

Notwithstanding the instructions given to Commodore Lambert to which reference will be made presently, the very fact of sending him at the head of a squadron to Rangoon makes one suspect that Dalhousie intended a rupture with Burma. It was not the duty of the Commodore to play the part of a diplomatist.

Mr. Cobden writes:

"But where was the necessity for sending a squadron at all, until after a demand for redress

\* Their names quite justified the part they (or rather their commandants) played in provoking the war.

† May it not be that Dalhousie selected Commodore Lambert and furnished him with secret instructions to provoke the Burmese to hostilities?

§ Vol. I, p. 417.

had been made through a civilian, or at least a Company's officer, who" understood the customs of the country, and the more especially so, as it was the first complaint that had been officially presented to the Government of Burmah ?†

The instructions given to Commodore Lambert were that he should demand reparation from the Governor of Rangoon for the injuries sustained by Captains Shepperd and Lewis, but wrote Dalhousie that

"It would be right that the Commodore should in the first instance be satisfied on this head.§

This implied that Commodore Lambert was to hear both sides and to inquire on the spot whether the compensation claimed was founded on justice.

The Commodore was furnished with a letter addressed to His Majesty the King of Burma which was to be forwarded to him "in the event of the Governor refusing or evading compliance." After forwarding the letter to the King at Ava, the Commodore was instructed to proceed to the Persian Gulf, whither his lordship understands he is under orders to proceed.\*\*

Dalhousie's instructions to the Commodore concluded as follows:

"It is to be distinctly understood that no act of hostility is to be committed at present, though the reply of the Governor should be unfavourable, nor until definite instructions regarding such hostilities shall be given by the Government of India."††

The instructions were quite definite but these were all set aside by the gallant Commodore, who at the head of his squadron sailed from Calcutta and landed at Rangoon towards the end of November, 1851. No sooner had he landed there

\* The writer on the Burmese War in the *Calcutta Review* for July, 1852, quotes from the Treaties and Engagements between the Honourable East India Company and Native Powers in Asia :

"Since this time (1840) all communications with the Burmese authorities have been conducted through the Commissioner in the Tenasserim Provinces."

Then the writer proceeds :

"For twelve years then all negotiations with the Court of Burmah have been conducted through the intervention of the Tenasserim Commissioner, . . upon receipt of the representations of Captains Lewis and Shepperd, . . the President in Council, . . . intimated to Colonel Bogle, that Commodore Lambert had been instructed to proceed to Rangoon, . . . Now this is the first point which is open to question. Why was the usual course of procedure departed from ? Why was not Colonel Bogle ordered to conduct the negotiations in the usual way ? . . . But we do think that it would have been well if the ordinary channel of communication had first been tried, and Colonel Bogle had been instructed, without any demonstrations of hostile intentions in the first instance, to make a firm and decided demand upon the King of Burmah for the dismissal and punishment of the offending officer, and ample pecuniary compensation to the aggrieved British subjects. . . . But Lord Dalhousie thought that the more decided method of sending at once an armed envoy, 'a Cromwellian Ambassador,' would have the effect of intimidating the Burmese authorities, and so avoiding the necessity of actual recourse to war." (P. 206-207.)

It seems that it was with the deliberable-intention of provoking the Burmese to hostilities that Dalhousie departed from the usual course of procedure.

† P. 100, 1867 edn.

§ Edition of 1867, p. 32.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 33.

†† *Ibid.*



than he encouraged the British residents of that place to bring their complaints and alleged grievances against the Governor of Rangoon. But before the day (28th November) appointed by the Commodore on which the residents were requested to bring their grievances in writing, he wrote on the 27th November, "before," as Cobden observes, "a written declaration was in his hands," the following insulting letter to the Governor of Rangoon :

"The object of my visit to Rangoon was at the request of the Most Noble the Marquis of Dalhousie, the Governor-General of British India, to demand redress for insults and injuries you have committed on subjects belonging to her Britannic Majesty Queen Victoria.

"Since my arrival so many more complaints have been made by persons residing at Rangoon who have a right to claim British protection that I have deemed it my duty to withhold my original demand until I have again made known their complaints to his lordship."

But he did not wait for instructions from Dalhousie. On the very next day (*i.e.*, 28th November) he forwarded to the Governor of Rangoon for transmission to His Majesty the King of Burma the letter with which he had been furnished by the Government of India and which he had been instructed to make use of only "in the event of the Governor refusing or evading compliance." At the same time the gallant Christian Commodore wrote a letter to the Prime Minister of His Majesty the King of Ava. Of course, the gallant Commodore thought it beneath his dignity to show any courtesy to the Governor of Rangoon, for in writing to him he made use of language as follows :

"I shall expect that every despatch will be used for forwarding the same, and I hold you responsible for an answer being delivered in these waters within five weeks from this day."†

The Commodore at the same time wrote an account of his proceedings to the Governor-General of India, which he sent off to Calcutta by a steamer in charge of Captain Latter.

The list of grievances presented to the Commodore by the British residents was a long one, for it contained no less than 38 items. No one in his senses would have attached any importance to this document, for it bore no signatures of those who were alleged to have been the aggrieved persons and was curiously enough mostly without dates. But any stick is good enough to beat a dog with. So the list of alleged grievances which Cobden called "absurd" was considered sufficient to pick a quarrel with the Burmese Government.§

\* *Ibid.*, p. 35.

† *Ibid.*, p. 36.

§ Regarding these alleged grievances of the British residents at Rangoon, Ellenborough, who himself as Governor-General of India knew how to get up wars in India, observed from his place in the House of Lords on February 6th 1852 :

"He also wished to know whether, before any requisition was sent to the King of Ava for reparation for the injuries inflicted on British subjects in Rangoon any trustworthy officer of ours was sent there to ascertain the truth of their representations, and the extent of the injuries inflicted ? He could recollect—it was not so distant an era—he could recollect the circumstances of a complaint which was brought under the notice of the British Government, by a certain Don Pacifico. Athens rejoiced in one Pacifico, but he could assure their lordships that there were dozens of Pacificos at Rangoon. If there were not the grossest ignorance of or the strangest misrepresenta-

The demand which Commodore Lambert had made on the Governor of Rangoon "for an answer being delivered" to him "within five weeks from this day" (i.e., 28th November), was complied with, for it arrived on the New Year's day, being a day within the limited time. The Buddhist sovereign of Burma, not desirous to go to war with the Christian Government of India, for he was conscious of his weakness, was quite willing and ready to accede to all the demands which had been made on him. To show his sincerity, he disgraced the Governor of Rangoon by recalling him and sending another nobleman to replace him. The Commodore even admitted that the King was sincere. On the 1st of January, 1852, he wrote to the Government of India that

"the Burmese Government have dismissed the Governor of Rangoon, and promised to settle the demand made on them by the Government of India.

"I am of opinion that the King is sincere, and that his Government will fully act up to what he has promised."\*

But this would not have served the purpose of the gallant Christian Commodore and so he tried to pick a quarrel with the new Governor, who arrived at Rangoon on the 4th January. The next day Commodore Lambert

"sent Mr. Edwards, the assistant-interpreter, to ascertain when it would be convenient for him to receive an officer with a letter stating the nature of the claims which the Government of British India had made on that of Burmah, and to say that when all had been adjusted he should do himself the honour of personally paying his respects to him; the reply to which was that the Governor was ready at any time to receive communications from him; and the following day was fixed."†

At the instance of Mr. Edwards, the new Governor removed the embargo by which the inhabitants of Rangoon had been prevented from holding communication with the boats of the squadron. Referring to this act of the new Governor, Cobden very truly observes:

"It is important that this fact should be borne in mind as an answer to the vague statements, for which no official proofs are afforded, that the new Governor had, on his first arrival, by his proclamation and other acts, shown an unfriendly disposition towards the British residents."§

On the 6th January,

tions about Rangoon, on the part of those who have written about it, Rangoon was the sink of Asia—the Alsatia to which all men went who could not keep a footing elsewhere. Persons of European origin, who had discovered that Asia was too hot to hold them, lived in Ava, and generally went to Rangoon, and there under the same, or perhaps some other name, endeavoured to gain a new reputation or a new fortune. He should not wish the Government to take any political measures with regard to Ava, without sending an officer there to inquire into the circumstances. He regretted that this had not been done in the first instance; for it was reported that when the Commodore was sent to Rangoon with his fleet, he found circumstances very different from those which had been represented to him. The Don Pacificos pushed off their boats, and went on board with representations of the damage which they said they had sustained." (*Ibid.*, p. 38.)

\* P. 43, *Ibid.*

† Burmah Papers, 1852, p. 36. (Pp. 44-45, *Ibid.*)

§ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

"the Commodore directed Captain Fishbourne, commanding Her Majesty's steamer *Hermes* Captain Latter, and two officers of the *Hermes*, with Mr. Edwards, to proceed and deliver to the Governor the letter containing the demands he was charged to make. Captain Latter was at the time on board the *Proserpine*, finishing the Burmese translation of the letter which was to be given to the Governor, and to give him due warning of their approach, on his own responsibility, as there was no time to spare, he sent Mr. Edwards on shore to him, to give notice of their coming, and charged him to say that, as he had already shown his friendly feelings by his amicable expressions of the day before, with reference to the time of receiving a communication from Commodore Lambert, there would be no necessity for making any display in receiving them, so that there could be no necessity for any delay."<sup>\*</sup>

The Governor had consented to receive a *communication* and not a *deputation* from the Commodore, for no previous arrangement had been come to for its reception. Cobden says :

"To all who are acquainted with the customs of the East, and the childlike importance which Oriental nations, and especially the Burmese, attach to the ceremonial of visits, it must be evident that the course about to be pursued was pretty certain to end unsatisfactorily. The Governor had expressed his readiness to receive a *communication*, not a *deputation*, from Commodore Lambert, and he had entreated the clerk of the interpreter to bring it himself. Mr. Edwards could run in and out of his house freely, as bearer either of a message or letter, because, for a person of his inferior rank, no formal reception was necessary, . . . An Englishman, in such a dilemma, would order his servant to tell an unbidden caller he was 'not at home.' In the East, if the unwelcome visitor present himself in the middle of the day the answer is, 'My master is asleep.'"

The deputation who were bearers of the letter from the Commodore

"landed at about noon, and proceeded to Mr. Birrell's house to procure horses to take them up, as the distance was too much to walk in the sun."<sup>†</sup>

Regarding the letter, Cobden writes and he has put these words in italics :

"There was nothing in the contents of the letter which in the slightest degree called upon the writer to force the Governor to receive it by the hands of a deputation."

Of course it was not possible for the Governor of Rangoon to have received the deputation without previous arrangement. Cobden justly says :

What should we think of an American deputation who required us to dispense with our Lord Chamberlain, Gold-sticks, and Beef-eaters, and receive them after the simple fashion of the White House at Washington? Might we not probably doubt if they were sober?"

But the British Commodore considered the non-reception of the deputation and of their

*"having been kept waiting for a full quarter of an hour in the sun"*

a very sufficient cause of going to war with Burma. He did not consider it necessary to afford an opportunity to the Governor of Rangoon to explain or apologise for what had occurred or to refer the matter to the Government of India or that of Burma. It is recorded in the Parliamentary papers :

"The Commodore forthwith directed a boat to be sent to summon some of the English residents

\* *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

† *Ibid.*, p. 47.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

from the shore. On their arrival, he warned them to be prepared to leave the town during the afternoon, and requested them to give notice to all other British subjects. . . .

"The British subjects, men, women, and children, to the amount of several hundred, took refuge during the afternoon on board the shipping in the river and before the evening had set in, the vessels had commenced dropping down the river. . . .

"It was dark before the Commodore issued orders to seize what was usually styled the Yellow Ship" \*

which belonged to the sovereign of Burma and which was anchored a little above the squadron.

The very same day, the Commodore issued the notification of blockade in which he declared that

"In virtue of authority from the Governor-General of India, I do hereby declare the rivers of Rangoon, the Bassein, and the Salween above Moulmein, to be in a state of blockade, and, with the view to the strict enforcement thereof, a competent force will be stationed in, or near the entrance of the said rivers immediately." †

Regarding the above notification, Cobden says

"that there does not appear in the whole of the papers presented to Parliament one word or syllable of remonstrance or remark on the part of the Governor-General in vindication of his own authority—no, not even after Commodore Lambert, as if in very derision and mockery, had in his notification declared the coast in a state of blockade, *'in virtue of authority from the Governor-General of British India.'*" §

But it never struck Cobden that Commodore Lambert might have possibly received secret instructions from the Governor-General of British India to enter upon hostilities with the Burmese nation. It is on this assumption only that we can explain his conduct and that of the Government of India towards the Burmese and also towards the Commodore. Writes Cobden :

"It is a most perplexing fact throughout these papers, that, although it is apparent that the Governor-General perceives the rashness of the acts of Commodore Lambert, . . . yet not one word falls from him to show that he was more than a passive looker-on at the contemptuous disregard of his own instructions!" (*Ibid.*, p. 60).

This goes to confirm our suspicion of the Commodore having received secret instructions from the Governor-General of India to pursue the course which he did and which precipitated the war with the Burmese. Of course, the conduct of the gallant Commodore can not be defended by any unprejudiced man or a lover of fair play. Even the writer of the article on the Burmese War in the *Calcutta Review* for July, 1852, who appears from internal evidence to be none else than Marshman,\*\*

\* Parliamentary Papers, 1852, p. 46.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 51-53.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

\*\* Marshman is mentioned several times in General Sir William Sleeman's *Journey through Oude* (Bentley, 1858)—see vol. ii, pp. 390, 397,—as the writer of "rabid articles" in favour of the absorption of Native States, and is stigmatised by Sir Henry Lawrence as "a perfect filibuster."—Kaye's *Lives of Indian Officers*, vol. II, p. 314.

Of course Marshman did not support Dalhousie's measure out of love for him. He was very

who, as the son of a clergyman, was brought up on the teaching of the Bible from his cradle and who, to exemplify that teaching of Christ which said "Do unto others," etc., was an unflinching supporter of Dalhousie's acts of spoliation, could not defend the Commodore. He wrote :

"We fully agree with Lord Dalhousie then, that Commodore Lambert could not pass over this act of studied contumely without notice. But to have noticed it *in some way* and to have avenged it *in the special way* in which Commodore Lambert did avenge it, are two things altogether different: . . . As the King has so promptly disavowed the conduct of the previous Governor of Rangoon, we think he was entitled to an opportunity of stating whether he approved of the doings of this one, and it does seem to us that no evil would have resulted, if the Commodore had done all that he did, with the important exception of the seizure of the "*Yellow Ship*," and had made a peremptory demand of the King that he should command the Governor to proceed on board the *Fox*, . . . to make to Captain Fishbourne and the officers who had accompanied him, such an apology as Commodore Lambert should dictate to him. Whether the 'Golden Foot' would have acceded to this demand or not, we cannot determine. Very probably he would not, but his refusal would have put us into a more *comfortable* position in a national point of *view* than that which we actually occupy.

"The seizure of the King's ship was then the first act of war on our part."

Cobden observes :

"The conduct of the Governor of Rangoon is now a subject of minor importance—the question for the statesman, the historian, and the moralist is, were we justified, whatever his behaviour was, with the known friendly disposition of the King, in commencing war with the Burmese nation?\*

Of course, no British author has ventured to answer this question.

Great was the apprehension of the inhabitants of Rangoon at the seizure of the King's "*Yellow Ship*." Writes Cobden :

"A covey of partridges with a hawk in view, ready to make its fell swoop, or a flock of sheep with a wolf's eyes glaring into the fold, could not shrink more timidly from that terrible and irresistible foe than did the Burmese officials at the prospect of a hostile collision with England, Captain Latta says that so great was their apprehension when the Commodore seized the King's ship that 'they even seemed alarmed for the safety of their own heads.'†

In vain did the Burmese officials entreat the English Commodore to release the King's ship. In vain did the Governor of Rangoon send the Dallah Governor to the Commodore to plead for him and overlook his fault, if any. The Dallah Governor told the Commodore

amply rewarded for his writings. Thus Mr. J. L. Waller, in his evidence before the Select Committee on colonization in India on 8th June, 1858, being questioned,

"4088. Does it pay, as a mercantile speculation, to set up a newspaper to defend the Government in India?"

said,

"I can state that the proprietor of a paper which defended the Government has retired with a handsome fortune, . . . the "*Friend of India*" was notoriously, when I was in India, supporting the Government measures."

Of course, Marshman is alluded to in the above.

\* *Ibid.*, p. 55.

† *Ibid.*, p. 61.

"that he had no doubt that when the King of Ava became acquainted with the insolent conduct of his subordinates to those who came to make a friendly communication, refusing to receive such communication, and thus jeopardising his throne, he would visit them with condign punishment.\*"

But the Commodore was not moved by the entreaties and pleading of the Burmese officials. He towed away the King's ship, which caused great catastrophe. In the words of the Commodore:

'Her Majesty's steam-sloop *Hermes*, with the King of Ava's ship in tow, passed us at half past nine [January 10th], when the stockade opened a sharp cannonade on her Majesty's ship *Fox*, which was instantly returned with shot and shell, and the Burmese battery was in a short time silenced. On the smoke clearing away not a person was to be seen on the shore or in the boats.

"Our fire, I have no doubt, must have done great execution, for I have reason to believe that at least 3,000 men were opposed against us."

Commenting on the above, wrote Cobden :

"On the 6th, at night, Commodore Lambert seized the King's ship, which he held in his possession at anchor opposite the town for three days, during which time the Burmese made no attempt to retake it; but on the contrary, conciliatory visits were paid to the Commodore by the authorities of the highest rank in the neighbourhood, . . . . . There is no reason to suppose that any act of hostility would have been committed had the King's ship been merely kept at anchor in the power of the British. But to have allowed a Burmese ship of war to be towed out of the river by foreigners, passing under the great stockade or battery without molestation, would have involved the disgrace and destruction of those who were responsible to the King of Ava for the protection of his property."§

Technically, the Burmese fired the first shot. This is exactly what the Commodore and his officers were longing for. For, this furnished them with the handle to go to war with that Buddhist nation. Cobden has put the case very vividly when he says :—

"Let us suppose that, instead of Rangoon, the scene of these operations had been at Charleston ..... A ship of war belonging to the Government of the United States, lying at Charleston, is instantly seized and, notwithstanding notice was given that, if an attempt should be made to carry her off, the Commodore's ships would be fired upon from the shore, she is towed out to sea, the American battery opening fire as they pass and receiving in return a broadside which does 'great execution.' What would have been the response to this news when it reached England? Can any one doubt that one unanimous cry would have been raised for the disgrace and punishment of Commodore Lambert? And why is a different standard of justice applied in the case of Burmah? Ask your own conscience, reader, if you be an Englishman, whether any better answer can be given than that America is powerful, and Burmah weak."\*\*

We suggest another answer. It is that the conscience of a European people is such an unknown and unknowable quantity that its existence is probably to be doubted when dealings with non-European nations are concerned.

Cobden then proceeds :

"It might be expected that, having carried off a ship of war and killed a number of the

\* Parliamentary papers, p. 43.

† *Ibid.*, p. 41,

§ *Ibid.*, p. 66,

\*\* *Ibid.*, pp. 67-69.

Burmese force, sufficient 'satisfaction' had been obtained for a claim of £920. But the coast of Burmah was still declared in a state of blockade."

Referring to the correspondence which took place between the Buddhist Burmese and the Christian English regarding the release of the King's ship and the conduct of the Governor of Rangoon, Cobden was forced to write :

"The common sense and logic of the above correspondence, as well as its philanthropic sentiments, present, I am sorry to say, a most favourable contrast to the Christian side of this correspondence."†

Dalhousie was addressed by the Governor of Rangoon, through his Secretary Mr. (afterwards Sir Frederick) Halliday. The Governor's letter elicited the following remarks from Cobden :

"The letters of the Burmese authorities, translated into English, be it remembered, by hostile pen, are remarkable for their terseness and clear common sense, and offer a striking contrast to the lengthy, rambling and inconclusive reasoning which characterises the British part of the correspondence."§

The Governor's letter to Halliday, dated Rangoon, February 2nd, 1852, concluded as follows :

"Therefore, as soon as the officer which the Government of India is prepared to appoint, in conformity with existing treaties, shall arrive, a satisfactory and amicable arrangement can be made of the payment of the 9,948 rupees extorted from Captains Lewis and Shepperd, also with reference to the re-delivery of the King of Ava's ship, seized by Commodore Lambert.

"With reference to the question of the disrespect said to have been shown to the deputation sent with a letter by Commodore Lambert, it should be borne in mind that the English officers have been stating their own version of the case, and consequently, whilst shielding themselves, they have thrown all the blame on the other side."\*\*

But the Scotch Governor-General was thirsty to taste the blood of the Burmese. He was not inclined to maintain peace with the Burmese. Writes Cobden :

"No sooner did it (the Rangoon Governor's letter) reach the Governor-General of India than he (with the Burmese ship of war still in his power) resolved to 'exact reparation by force of arms.' Orders were given for fitting out an armed expedition, and he now proclaimed as his ultimatum that, in addition to a compliance with the preceding demands, the Burmese should be compelled, as the price of peace, in consideration of the expenses of the expedition, and of compensation for property, to pay ten lacs of rupees, or one hundred thousand of pounds."††

Regarding the "Minute", an extract from which only is published in the Parliamentary papers, which Dalhousie wrote on the occasion, Cobden says :

"It has none of the dignity or force which properly belongs to a State paper. It dwells with a minuteness quite feminine upon details respecting points of ceremonial, and breaches of ceremonial, breaches of etiquette, but in arguing the main questions at issue the 'Minute,' in its present form must be pronounced an unstatesmanlike, immoral, and illogical production."§§

\* *Ibid.*, p. 69.

† *Ibid.*, p. 71.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 77.

†† *Ibid.*, p. 78.

§§ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

Cobden then proceeds to demonstrate the unstatesmanlike, immoral and illogical nature of the Minute. He writes :

"He (Lord Dalhousie) knew that an interval of thirty-five days was required for the receipt of an answer to a despatch sent to Ava from Rangoon, and there was the additional time necessary for sending a steamer from Rangoon to Calcutta, which with delays, could not fairly be calculated at less than another week, making together forty-two days. Now from January 7th, the date of Commodore Lamberts' letter, to February 12th, the date of the 'Minute,' is just thirty-six days; so that this hostile expedition against the Burmese nation was resolved upon before sufficient time had been allowed to the King to offer the explanation which he had been invited to give. A letter from the King was... on its way, and actually reached the Governor-General's hands within a week of the date of his 'Minute'.

"But the unstatesmanlike fault (to use the mildest term) of the 'Minute' lies in this that, whereas the specific charges are directed against the Governor of Rangoon and him only, an assumption pervades the whole argument that the Burmese *Government* is the offending party: hence the vague and confused phraseology which sometimes speaks of the 'King,' in some places of "Burmah," and in others of the 'Governor of Rangoon.'...

"The offence offered to the majesty and power of England, in keeping the deputation waiting in the sun 'a full quarter of an hour,' is discussed in all its bearings; *but there is not one syllable of allusion to the fact that Commodore Lambert had, in the teeth of instructions to the contrary, carried off a Burmese vessel of war, and done 'great execution' among those who attempted to oppose him.*"

The war being resolved upon, it was prosecuted with great execution and slaughter of the Burmese. Cobden writes :

"A war it can hardly be called. A rout, a massacre, or a visitation, would be a more appropriate term. A fleet of war-steamers and other vessels took up their position in the river, and on the 11th April, 1852, *being Easter Sunday*, they commenced operations by bombarding both the Rangoon and Dallah shores. Everything yielded like toywork beneath the terrible broadsides of our ships... There is small room for the display of courage where there is little risk, ...."†

There is no necessity of describing in detail the operations of the Second Burmese War. When the war was over a very large territory was wrested from the sovereign of Burma and annexed to the jurisdiction of the Government of India. Writes Cobden :

"These wars are carried on at the expense of the people of India.....What exclusive interest had the half-naked peasant of Bengal in the settlement of the claims of Captains Shepperd and Lewis, that he should alone be made to bear the expense of the war which grew out of them ?"...§

"Lord Dalhousie begins with a claim on the Burmese for less than a thousand pounds, which is followed by the additional demand of an apology from the Governor of Rangoon for the insult offered to our officers; next his terms are raised to one hundred thousand pounds, and an apology from the king's ministers; then follows the invasion of the Burmese territory; when, suddenly, all demands for pecuniary compensation and apologies cease, and his Lordship is willing to accept the cession of Pegu as a 'compensation' and 'reparation' for the past....."¶¶

The reasons which led Dalhousie to annex Pegu are thus set forth by the *Friend*

\* *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

† *Ibid.*, p. 98.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¶¶ *Ibid.*, p. 104.



(1) of India, which as said before, was his lordship's organ. Wrote the above-mentioned journal :

"In making Pegu British, we take from the kingdom of Burma its chief financial resources, and its political strength ; we deprive it of the sinews of war. It is to this prostration of the power of the Burmese, and the dread inspired in the Court by our own power, that we must look for the security of our new border-line. For the last twenty-five years, they have occupied the territory lying between our own provinces of Arracan and of Moulmein. A line of hills separates the former from Pegu: but there are three or four passes, through which a barbarian army, unencumbered with artillery and commissariat stores, might at any time have invaded the province, while Moulmein has always been open to incursion."

The nations of Europe are worshippers of gold. Pegu was supposed to be, rich in gold mines. One Rev. F. Mason, M. A., in his work on "Tenasserim, or Notes on the Fauna, Flora, Minerals, and Nations of British Burmah, and Pegu" wrote of gold being plentiful in Pegu. According to him

"all the streams from the lofty granite mountains bring down their tribute of the precious metal." "There is a rumour widely current in Burmah, that valuable mines are known to the Burmese Court, but the secret is strictly guarded, because the treasures of the earth are regarded as a kind of royal reserve-fund, only to be drawn upon in great emergencies."

Mason tried to prove that Pegu was the Ophir of Solomon; the Talains called it *Subarnabhumi*. He wrote:

"The ancient name of the Moubee, in the delta of the Irrawady, was Suvanna-nadee, or 'river of gold', indicating that Pegu was famous in antiquity for its gold; and gold and silver appear to have been much more abundant than they are now, even three centuries ago." "The Sanskrit form of Suvanna is *suvarna*, and this, when the final syllable is dropped, is nearly identical with Sôupheir, the Greek name of Ophir."

No wonder that the mammon-worshipping Governor-General could not resist the temptation of annexing Pegu to British India.

The subjugation of the Burmese was not an easy matter. Writes Ludlow:

"Pegu, after official annexation, was over-run with so-named robbers, declaring that if they had to give up the country to us it should be as a desert. The Peguese bitterly asked if this was to be our protection. Fortunately for us, an internal revolution broke-out in Ava, a more peaceful monarch was set on the throne. But though peace was nominally re-established, quiet was not, so late as April, 1855."

The Second Burmese War was the last war fought by the East India Company which resulted in the augmentation of their territory.

## APPENDIX

Cobden, in a footnote to the last page of his pamphlet, has given the following extract from a speech delivered by General Cass in the Senate of the United States, December, 1852 :

"Another of the native Powers of Hindostan has fallen before the march of a great commercial corporation and its 8,000,000 or 10,000,000 of people have gone to swell the immense congregation of British subjects in India. And what do you think was the cause of the war which has just ended in the swallowing up of the kingdom of Burmah? The whole history of human contests, since the dispersing of the family of man upon the plains of Shinar, exhibits no such national provocation, followed by such national punishment. Political arithmetic contains no such sum as that which drove England to this unwelcome measure. Had we not the most irrefragable evidence, we might well refuse credence to this story of real rapacity. But the fact is indisputable that England went to war with Burmah, and annihilated its political existence, for the non-payment of the disputed demand of £ 990. So says the London *Times*, the authoritative expositor of the opinions and policy of England. 'To appreciate,' says the impersonation of British feeling, 'correctly the character of this compulsory bargain, the reader must recollect that the sum originally demanded of the Burmese for the indemnification of our injured merchants was £990, and Lord Dalhousie's terms, even when the guns of our steamers were pointed against Rangoon, comprehended, in consideration of the expenses of the expedition and of compensation for property, a claim only of £100,000.' *Well does it become such a people to preach fromillies to other nations upon disinterestedness and moderation.*"

## CHAPTER LXXXVI

### DALHOUSIE'S ACQUISITIONS BY FRAUD

During Lord Dalhousie's tenure of office as Governor-General of India only two wars were fought which resulted in the annexation of the Panjab and a portion of Burma. But in wiping out the independent existences of many other principalities and native States of India, he did not appeal to the sword. To accomplish his object, he had to resort to fraud and not to force. Writes Kaye:

"He (Dalhousie) had then done with foreign wars: his after-career was one of peaceful invasion. Ere long there was a word which came to be more dreaded than that of Conquest. The native mind is readily convinced by the inexorable logic of the sword. There is no appeal from such arbitration. To be invaded and to be conquered is a state of things appreciable by the inhabitant of India. It is his "kismet," his fate, God's will. One stronger than he cometh and taketh all that he hath. There are, however, manifest compensations. His religion is not invaded; his institutions are not violated. Life is short, and the weak man, patient and philosophical, is strong to endure and mighty to wait. But Lapse is a dreadful and an appalling word, for it pursues the victim beyond the grave. Its significance in his eyes is nothing short of eternal condemnation."

The word "lapse" had a peculiar meaning in the history of India in the fifties of the last century. It meant that those native states which entered into an alliance with the English power of India were to lose their very existence at the sweet will of the alien Governor-General. It was Edmund Burke who, in his speech on the 1st December, 1783, on the motion for going into a Committee on Mr. Fox's India Bill, said:

"I engage myself to you to make good three positions, First, I say, that from Mount Imaus (Himalaya) . . . . where it touches us in the latitude of twenty-nine, to Cape Comorin, in the latitude of eight, that there is not a single prince, state, or potentate, great or small, in India, with whom they have come into contact, whom they have not sold."

The above was not altogether declamatory language which orators are in the habit of indulging in—language in which truth is sacrificed to make impressions on an audience by mere rhetorical expressions. No, every word of what Burke said was true and its truth was very painfully exhibited in Dalhousie's regime. The descendants of those princes with whose help the English succeeded in establishing their power in this country were very shamefully treated and on their death their principalities annexed in the teeth of existing treaties on the ground of alleged want of heirs! This sort of annexation was given the euphemistic name of "lapse."

The three Mahratta principalities of Satara, Nagpur and Jhansi and four minor ones were thus annexed in the regime of Dalhousie.

Of course, to justify his unjust and unjustifiable acquisitions he resorted to hair-splitting distinctions as regards the classification of Native States. In a letter dated 13th June, 1854, he wrote to Sir Charles Wood:

"I had a definite principle of distinction in my mind, and I think it is a sound one. There are three chief classes of Hindoo states in India.

"1st. . . . Hindu sovereignties which are not tributary and which are not and never have been subordinate to a paramount power,

2nd. . . . Hindu sovereignties and chiefships which are tributary, and which owe subordination to the British Government as their paramount, in the place of the Emperor of Delhi, the Peishwa, etc,

3rd. . . . Hindu sovereignties and chiefships created or revived by the Sanad (grant) of the British Government.

"Over principalities of the first class I contend that we have no power whatever, and have no right, except that of might, over their adoptions.

"Principalities of the second class require our assent to adoption, which we have a right to refuse, but which policy would usually lead us to concede."

"In the principalities of the third class I hold that succession should never be allowed to go by adoption."

Of course, no sensible man can find any essential distinction in the status of a native state of the 2nd or 3rd class mentioned by Dalhousie. Whatever the origin of a state, after its recognition as such, it should have been treated according to a uniform code of international law. But any pretext, however flimsy or plausible, was good enough with the Governor-General to swallow the native states of India.

Sir Charles Wood in replying to the above letter on the 9th of August, said :

"To prevent mistakes, I will tell you how I distinguish them.

"*First*. States which have from a time antecedent to our rule been independent or quasi-independent, not tributary or owing more than nominal allegiance to any superior.

"*Secondly*. States dating from a similar period, but owing their origin distinctly to a grant from some authority to which we have succeeded, and tributary.

"*Thirdly*. States owing their origin to our grant or gift.

"In the first class I apprehended that an adoption properly made ought, as a matter of course, to be recognised. In the second, we may or may not recognise it as we choose, recognition being the general practice. In the third, if heirs fail, according to the terms of our grant, we annex."

Of course, in the above correspondence we do not perceive any expression of so-called generosity or philanthropy. When political expediency necessitated the creation or revival of a state, its existence was not to be governed by the rules and customs of the tribe to which the ruling prince belonged but by the arbitrary policy of the alien rulers. Its extinction was to be apprehended at any moment. Had not the Indian Mutiny taken place in 1857, the fate of all the Native States of India would have been sealed. For it was as far back as 1834, that the Court of Directors of the East India Company had laid down their policy in regard to adoptions in these terms :

"Whenever it is optional with you to give or to withhold your consent to adoptions, the indulgence should be the exception and not the rule, and should never be granted but as a special mark of approbation."

The Court of Directors did not classify the native states as Dalhousie did, and so it is not too much to say that the native states would one and all have been annexed on the ground of alleged failure of heir and by lapse. Before Dalhousie's time several states had been annexed on the so-called ground of "lapse"—states which certainly were not "created or revived by the sanad (grant) of the British Government." The principalities of Kolaba, Mandavi and Ambala were annexed and treated as "lapses" by Dalhousie's predecessors.

The first Indian principality which Dalhousie treated as a "lapse" was the State of Satara.

## CHAPTER LXXXVII

### THE ANNEXATION OF SATARA

Robert Knight, in his pamphlet on the Inam Commission Unmasked wrote :

*"Bajee Rao the last Peishwa.*

"The circumstances under which Mr. Elphinstone's proclamation of 1818, guaranteeing the land-holders of the Peishwa's territories in their possessions, was promulgated, must first come under review. When that manifesto was issued, the power of Bajee Rao, the Peishwa, was yet unbroken, while the assurances it breathed, and the reputation of our Government for scrupulous adherence to its engagements, were among the most powerful causes which contributed to his ruin. It is hard to say whether the Mahrattas or our own Government attached the more importance to the appearance of that manifesto. It was carefully timed upon the fall of Satara up to which date the pursuit of the Peishwa had been productive of nothing important, if we except the political effect of holding him up as a fugitive in the eyes of the country. The repulse at Kirkee, and the stand of the grenadiers at Korygaom, were all the successes of the campaign, and the historian of the war has distinctly affirmed that, in the various skirmishes which ensued, no advantageous result had been gained by either party. The truth is, we fought Bajee Rao first with the proclamation, and then with the Satara family, which most opportunely fell into our hands at Ashtah, some ten days after its appearance. The assurances of the proclamation, and the reinstatement of the Rajah of Satara, ruined the Peshwa, and our deliberate withdrawal now from the pledges then given, merits the reprobation of every conscientious man, however specious the argument upon which the withdrawal has been recommended."\*

Mounstuart Elphinstone had to recognise the descendant of Sivaji as the ruler of the Mahrattas, otherwise it would have been impossible for him and the British to make the people of the Deccan give up the cause of the fugitive Peshwa Baji Rao. But after getting the Satara prince in his clutches he did not fulfil all those promises which he had made to him.† The name of the Satara prince was Pratap Singh. He was a minor when he was used as a tool by the British to

\* The Inam Commission Unmasked, by Robert Knight, pp. 45-46.

† The following will show the nature of the promises made to the Satara prince.

In a *bakhar* or historical sketch written by one Balwant Rao Chitnavis, which was translated into English by Dr. Milne, who had retired from the service of the East India Company as President of the Medical Board of Bombay, it is stated that, after the British Government had formed an alliance with Baji Rao, an agent was deputed to the Governor-General to solicit that the management of the country might be made over to the Raja and was informed that the request could not be acceded to until the existing treaty had been violated when his Highness might rest assured "that he being the possessor of the dominion it should revert to him." In this "Historical" sketch, Mr. Elphinstone's breach of faith is referred to. He is said to have promised that in case the Peishwa violated the treaty or levied war, then his Highness the Maharaja should be confident of his word, which he had just pledged for the restoration of his government, requesting that this promise might not transpire.

That Elphinstone never contradicted the abovementioned statements, although these were published while he was alive, surely proves their genuineness.

serve their purpose. After Baji Rao had made his submission and was granted a pension and jagir at Bithur, Pratap Singh was recognised by the British as the sovereign of Satara. Captain Grant Duff was appointed Resident at his court and he was to conduct the affairs of the State during the minority of the Prince. When the Prince attained majority and became the ruler of his principality, he was found to be a very intelligent and shrewd man and far above the average of Indian princes. It was a certain Roman who used the metaphorical expression of cutting off tall poppies. Prince Pratap Singh was a tall poppy in the estimation of the Governor of Bombay—Sir Robert Grant, a son of that Charles Grant who was the reputed "Christian Director of the East India Company." So he issued the fiat to crush Pratap Singh. And it was done. The prince was deposed and sent in captivity to Benares. His brother was appointed ruler of Satara in his stead.

Towards 1848 both the brothers died. Unfortunately none of them had any male child. But both the brothers had, according to Hindu Law, adopted sons who possessed every right to inherit the sovereignty of Satara. But Satara was annexed on the plausible plea that there was no legal heir to its throne.\* Scotch logic was made use of to come to this conclusion. But the real reason for this act of spoliation and gross violation of all treaties with Satara has been mentioned by Sir William Lee-Warner,† who writes :

"It must also be noted that while Lord Dalhousie's mind was yet open, the very first letter which he received at Calcutta from Hobhouse, dated the 24th December, 1847, contained this obvious incitement to annexation :

"The death of the ex-Raja of Satara certainly comes at a very opportune moment. The reigning Raja is, I hear, in very bad health, and it is not at all impossible we may soon have to decide upon the fate of his territory. I have a very strong opinion that on the death of the present prince without a son, and no adoption should be permitted, this petty principality should be merged in the British Empire, and if the question is decided in my "day of sextonship," I shall leave no stone unturned to bring about that result. But, of course, I should like to have your opinion on the subject."

The ex-convict Hobhouse who indited the above letter was an uncle of Dalhousie.

\*W. M. Torrens, M. P., wrote :

"Treaties have throughout all time been for the most part brief in language, general in the terms employed, and confessedly intended, not as exhaustive anticipations of all imaginable contingencies, but as laying down broadly, and in simple forms of speech, the outlines of peace and amity, upon the implied condition that the application of these terms to any and every case that might thereafter arise should be such as the common understanding of both communities would admit, or the judgment of an impartial arbiter declare. Tested by this obvious rule of international right the guarantee of perpetual inheritance was undoubtedly intended, and undoubtedly understood, to imply the devolution of title, dignity and power to whatever heirs could from time to time establish their respective claims,—not according to the *lex loci* of the foreign and alien party to the compact, but according to the *lex loci* of the state whose autonomy the treaty had been confessedly framed to assure." (*Empire in Asia, how we came by it: a book of confessions*, p. 357, Panini Office reprint.)

†Life of Lord Dalhousie, Vol II, p. 138.

And the Scotch "Laird of Cockpen" was very glad to do all that his ex-convict uncle desired him to do. Commenting on the above letter, Lee-Warner writes :

"Did ever Governor-General enter upon a line of policy with stronger pressure from higher authority ?"

Of course, had Dalhousie been an honest man, he would not have felt bound to obey the mandate of the higher authority. But the conscience of the statesmen of England and Scotland could not be relied upon when Indian questions were to be decided.

Of course, there was no justice or honesty in the step which Dalhousie took or was made to take in annexing Satara. The partisans of annexation, who were mostly Scotch, like the Duke of Argyll, Sir Louis Jackson, &c., say that no wrong was committed in thus acquiring that principality and incorporating it with the British Raj. With them the end justifies the means and so they do not scruple to resort to any act of occidental diplomacy based on Machiavellian policy to serve their purpose. Wrote one Anglo-Indian author :

"States, or bodies politic, are to be considered as moral persons, having a public will, capable and free to do right and wrong, inasmuch as they are collections of individuals, each of whom carries with him into the service of the community the same binding law of morality and religion which ought to control his conduct in private life. The Law of Nations is a complex system composed of various ingredients. It consists of general principles of right and justice, equally suitable to the government of individuals in a state of natural equality, and to the relations and conduct of nations, of a collection of usages, customs, and opinions, the growth of civilisation and commerce, and of a code of positive law."\*

Maine quotes an American jurist, who writes :

"The Law of Nations, unlike foreign Municipal Law, does not have to be proved as a fact. The Law of Nations makes an integral part of the laws of the land. Every nation, on being received at her own request into the circle of civilised governments, must understand that she not only attains rights of sovereignty and the dignity of national character, but that she binds herself also to the strict and faithful observance of all those principles, laws, and usages which have obtained currency amongst civilised states, and which have for their object the mitigation of the miseries of war."†

The Satara Raj did not pay any tribute to the British Government. In the petition submitted to the Queen Victoria, in 1874, the widowed Rani of Satara made out a strong case, showing that the Satara Raj was an independent State just like Switzerland, and so the British Government had no right to interfere with the laws and customs which regulated its succession.

The annexation of Satara was the first one carried out by Dalhousie on the doctrine of what he was pleased to euphemistically call "lapse." Yes, it was "lapse" of all morals on the part of the British rulers and not of heirs of the prince, which brought the Satara Raj under the yoke of those rulers.

For further details regarding the Satara question or questions, see my *Story of Satara*.

\* Sir Henry S. Maine's *Lectures on International Law*, p. 33.

† *Ibid.*, p. 37.

## CHAPTER LXXXVIII

### ANNEXATION OF NAGPUR

The annexation of Satara served as a precedent to the Scotch "Laird of Cockpen" to annex Nagpur in 1854. The last Raja of Nagpur, named Raghuj Bhonsla the 3rd, died on the 11th December, 1853, without leaving a son. And this served as an excuse for the "swallowing up" of this State by the Governor-General. From all the accounts which we have of this last Raja, it is evident that he was an intelligent prince and that he governed his principality well. Yet Dalhousie was not ashamed in writing of this Raja after his death as "having lived and died a seller of justice, a miser, a drunkard, and a debauchee." Of course, it was all false; but it served the purpose of the Governor-General to write like this. Otherwise no case could have been made out for this spoliation.

On the death of the Raja, his grandmother, the widow of Raghuj Bhonsla the 2nd, who had been regent during the minority of the last Raja, adopted the deceased Raja's grandnephew, named Yeshwunt Rao Aher Rao. The widows of the Raja also gave their consent to this adoption. The ceremonies of adoption were performed and the funeral rites of the deceased sovereign were celebrated by his adopted son.

The Resident, Mr. Mansel, would, as an occidental diplomatist, neither forbid nor give any "special encouragement" to the adoption until he received orders from the supreme government on the subject.\* Dalhousie on the 28th January, 1854, recorded a minute in which he declared that the sovereignty of Nagpur had "lapsed to the paramount power, for there was no heir or representative of the Bhonsla family or even a claimant to the throne of Nagpur." The Scotch lord conveniently ignored all the assurances which had been given to the House of Nagpur by the Government whom he represented in India. The treaty contracted by the Government of India with that of Nagpur was one of "perpetual friendship and alliance" and the State of Nagpur was officially declared in 1826 to be "one of the substantive powers of India."

As a substantive power of India, the Nagpur sovereign or his representative could adopt a son on the failure of a male issue according to the customary laws of his tribe and religion. Colonel Sutherland, Governor-General's Agent in Central India, in a letter dated 25th August, 1841, gives the following opinion with reference to adoption :

"There may be some difference of opinion on the subject of the right of a widow to adopt a son, where she was not enjoined or permitted to do so by her husband; where she had his authority, her right to do so would not, I think, be questioned anywhere in Rajpootana; and even where she had not his authority, her right would, I think, in most cases be recognised: the adoption being of course made from the nearest of kin to her deceased husband, although even in this respect great latitude is allowed."



Major Evans Bell in the chapter on the Right of Adoption in his work "The Empire in India"\* writes :

"Sir Richard Jenkins, in his Nagpore Report of 1827 (p. 146) declares the rule that had been observed in seating the Rajah, then a minor, on the throne, and that should be observed in choosing his successor from the female line, in case he should die without leaving a son. That rule was to choose the nearest male descendant of the last Rajah who had any.' According to that rule the late Rajah's grand-nephew, the great grandson of Rughojee the second's daughter and that Rajah's nearest male descendant, was chosen and adopted as a son, on the death of his grand-uncle, the late Rughojee the 3rd of Nagpore. Lord Dalhousie, without inquiry or notice, declared the Bhonsla family to be extinct, and the Nagpore State to have lapsed for want of an heir."

In another portion of the same work from which the above extract is given, Major Bell writes :

"In the year 1844 the Governor-General in Council, in reply to the Resident Colonel Spiers' request for instructions in the event of the Rajah dying without issue, made a distinct recognition of the right of adoption by the Rajah, and by members of the family in case of his death without having made an adoption. The passage to which I allude is the more worthy of attentive consideration, because it is quoted in Lord Dalhousie's Minute, p. 26, as a proof that the question of adoption was '*left open*' by the Government of India. But the passage will not bear such a construction. It is as follows :

'In the event of the death of the present Rajah without leaving children, or an adopted son, you should make arrangements for conducting the Government of Nagpore, pending the orders of the Government of India, which orders will be based on the circumstances that may present themselves at the time, and the right to make the adoption which might be considered to attach to any surviving member of the Rajah's family.

"The right of the Rajah himself to adopt a successor (*which Lord Dalhousie denied*) is here clearly recognised while, to say the least, no doubt, no hint of disapproval is thrown out against the contingent right of the widow or other surviving relative to adopt on behalf of the deceased Rajah. The ordered reference to Calcutta in such a case is obviously intended to guard against a disputed adoption, but conveys no doubt as to the general right."†

To quote the same author again :

"The Ranees of Nagpore were treated in exactly the same manner as those of Satara. They were never invited to express an opinion on the subject of the succession, and the grounds of the decision of Government, annihilating their sovereignty and their family, were never communicated to them. They were abruptly told that there was no heir to the musnud, and that the Rajah's dominions had '*reverted to the British Government*', and not another word of explanation was vouchsafed to them. A year or so after the annexation, they were able, in common with the general public, to inspect Lord Dalhousie's minute of the 28th January, 1854, penned about a month after the Raja's death, in which his grand-nephew and heir their adopted son, is styled '*a Maratha youth*,' and a '*stranger*,' and in which without any inquiry having been made, without any facts or information whatever, but by a purely *a priori* argument,— . . . Lord Dalhousie proved to the satisfaction of Mr. Halliday and Mr. Dorin, that the Ranees' natural jealousies, their feelings and interest, must make them averse to the continuance of the Raj in the person of an adopted son, and it would really be inhuman to encourage them to adopt.§

\* P. 144.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 200-201.

§ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

There was one member of the Governor-General's Council, by name General Low, who was opposed to the annexation of Nagpur. He protested against the minute of Lord Dalhousie proclaiming the extinction of the Bhonsla State. In his minute his Scotch Lordship had used language which more befitted the lips of a Court jester or a dramatic actor than a statesman conducting the serious business of a kingdom. Dalhousie had written in his Minute :

"I am well aware that the continuance of the Raj of Nagpore under some Marhatta rule, as an act of grace and favour on the part of the British Government, would be highly acceptable to native sovereigns and nobles of India, and there are, doubtless, many of high authority who would advocate the policy on that special ground. I understand the sentiment and respect it, but remembering the responsibility that is upon me, I cannot bring my judgment to admit that a kind and generous sentiment should outweigh a just and prudent policy."

Of course no serious statesman would use language like that quoted above. The minute of General Low was a protest against Dalhousie's wild statements. Wrote that gallant military officer in his minute dated February 10, 1854:

"If Great Britain shall retain her present powerful position among the States of Europe, it seems highly probable that, owing to the infringement of their treaties on the part of native Princes and other causes, the whole of India will, in the course of time, become one British province, but many eminent statesmen have been of opinion that we ought most carefully to avoid unnecessarily accelerating the arrival of that great change, and it is within my own knowledge that the following five great men were of that number—namely, Lord Hastings, Sir Thomas Munro, Sir John Malcolm, the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone, and Lord Metcalfe."

In the course of the same minute, he wrote again :

"When I went to Malwa, in 1850, where I met many old acquaintances, whom I had known when a very young man, and over whom I held no authority, I found these old acquaintances speak out much more distinctly as to their opinion of the Satara case, so much so, that I was, on several occasions, obliged to check them. It is remarkable that every native who ever spoke to me respecting the annexation of Satara, asked precisely the same question: 'What crime did the late Rajah commit that his country should be seized by the Company?' Thus clearly indicating their notions, that if any crime had been committed our act would have been justifiable, and not otherwise."

He also wrote that

"In one respect, the natives of India are exactly like the inhabitants of all parts of the known world, they like their own habits and customs better than those of foreigners."

Kaye, in the second chapter of the first volume of his great work, "A History of the Sepoy War in India," referring to Low's minute writes:

"Having thus in unmeasured opposition to the Dalhousie theory flung down the gauntlet of the old School at the feet of the Governor-General, Low ceased from the enunciation of general principles, and turned to the discussion of the particular case before him. He contended that the treaty between the British Government and the late Rajah did not limit the succession to heirs of his body, and that therefore, there was a clear title to succession in the Bhonslah family by means of a son adopted by either the Rajah himself or by his eldest widow, in accordance with law and usage. The conduct, he said, of the last Prince of Nagpore had not been such as to alienate his rights, he had been loyal to the Paramount State, and his country had not been misgoverned: there had been nothing to call for military interference on our part, and little to compel grave remonstrance and rebuke. For what crime, then, was his line to be cut off and the honours of his house

extinguished for ever? To refuse the right of adoption in such a case would, he alleged, be entirely contrary to the spirit, if not to the treaty.

"Of such opinions as these Low expected no support in the Council-chamber of Calcutta—no support from the authorities at home.\* It little mattered, indeed, what the latter might think, for the annexation of Nagpore was decreed and to be accomplished without reference to England."

So Nagpur was annexed and great indignities were inflicted on the widowed Ranis of the Palace. Almost all their jewels and other state as well as private furniture were seized and sold to the highest bidders. Writes Kaye:

"that which might soon have faded into an idea was rendered a galling and oppressive reality by the spoliation of the palace, which followed closely upon the extinction of the Raj. The live stock and dead stock of the Bhonslah were sent to the hammer.

"It must have been a great day for speculative cattle-dealers at Seetabaldee when the royal elephants, horses, and bullocks were sold off at the price of currier, and a sad day, indeed, in the royal household, when the venerable Bankha Baee, with all the wisdom and moderation of four score well-spent years upon her, was so stung by a sense of the indignity offered to her, that she threatened to fire the palace if the furniture were removed. But the furniture was removed, and the jewels of the Bhonsla family, with a few propitiatory exceptions, were sent to the Calcutta market. And I have heard it said that these seizures, these sales, created a worse impression, not only in Berar, but in the surrounding provinces, than the seizure of the kingdom itself."

In a footnote Kaye writes:

"Between five and six hundred elephants, camels, horses, and bullocks were sold for £1800. The Ranees sent a protest to the Commissioner, and memorialised the Governor-General, alleging, in the best English that the Palace could furnish, that "on the 4th instant (Sept.) the sale of animals, *viz.* bullocks, horses, camels, and elephants, commenced to sell by public auction and resolution—a pair of hackery bullocks, valued 100 rupees, sold in the above sale for 5 rupees."

But the secret reason for annexing the dominion of Nagpore was that which had prompted the Scotch Laird to wrest Berar from the Nizam. Nagpur was a great cotton producing province and there was possibility of developing or rather exploiting its resources by the natives of Great Britain. Writes Ludlow:

"It is clear.....that the Nizam's cessions in 1853 led to the annexation of Nagpore in 1854. For, as Lord Dalhousie phrased it, the 'essential interest of England' required that the territory of

\* Of course the authorities at home, those who called themselves Radicals or Liberals in politics, were in favor of absorbing the native states of India.

It should be borne in mind that the policy of annexations by lapse was the policy enunciated by the Liberals when in office in 1834. So Sir Charles Wood wrote on the 8th of March, 1854, to Dalhousie:

"You will have seen by a former letter that I encouraged your annexation of Nagpur, to which I have heard of no objection even from John Mill, who is the great supporter of Indian independence in the East India House."

On the 8th April Hogg wrote to Dalhousie:

"We shall probably have a discussion some time or other respecting Nagpur. There never was, and could not be a clearer case. Still Sullivan, at the dinner to Lord Harris, selected that occasion as appropriate for declaring his opinion that the annexation of Nagpur exceeded in iniquity the Russian aggression."

Of course, Sullivan spoke the truth, but this was unpalatable to the Liberal authorities at home, because they did not lose anything material and so perceptible by the physical senses, by encouraging their tool in India to annex territories on any flimsiest pretext whatever.

Nagpore should pass under British Government. The great field of supply of the best and cheapest cotton grown in India lies in the valley of Berar (ceded by the Nizam), and in 'the districts adjacent to it.' Those 'districts adjacent' were in Nagpore. During the past year, the Government had obtained by treaty with the Nizam, not the sovereignty indeed, but the perpetual possession and administration of the valley of Berar. This cottonfield, was, however, 'inaccessible for want of railroads': the possession of Nagpore would enable us to make them. We took both, as has been seen." (Thoughts on the policy of the Crown towards India. Allahabad reprint).

From an article on the Central Provinces published in the *Calcutta Review* for 1863, written presumably by Sir Richard Temple, some of the real reasons for annexing Nagpore can be guessed. The writer says:—

"The policy of the Government of Lord Dalhousie has secured to us a province not much inferior to Oude or the Panjab in resources and superior to them in climate. It has given us a province which, with some extension, and under the direction of a master-mind, will be inferior to few others in British India. It contains some stations superior in climate to any others in India, those on the Himalayan ranges alone excepted. The elevations of the Vindhyan and Mahadeva ranges offer retreats, pleasant as any which could be found away from Simlah, Darjeeling or the Neelgherries.

"No one now wishes to see the old regime restored. . . .The policy of Mr. Mansel has long been forgotten, . . ."

Then the writer refers to the difficulty that would have been experienced in conquering Nagpore. He writes:

"A kingdom constituted like that of Nagpore might have been difficult to conquer but when once annexed, . . . was easy of retention. The officers of the King, were paid by him, were grateful to him, were dependent on him. *They were not easily seduced*, and the opposition they might make would be considerable. With the fall of the king, however, they were obliged to succumb, and no fears were entertained but from the other branches of the reigning family."

The words italicised in the above extract tell their own tale. It would seem that the Britishers who prayed every day, "Lead us not into temptations but deliver us from all evils," must have tried the experiment of seducing the officers of the Nagpur Raj and because they failed in seducing them, they thought that the Nagpur Raj was growing strong and therefore it was necessary to annihilate its existence.

N. B.—Major Evans Bell has discussed at great length the question of the annexation of Nagpur in his two works, *viz*:—"The Empire in India" and "Prospects and Retrospects of Indian Policy."

## CHAPTER LXXXIX

### THE ANNEXATION OF JHANSI

Jhansi, a district in Bundelkhand, was in the times of the early Peshwas governed by an officer who was styled Subadar of Jhansi. He had only the temporary command of the district. "But one of them," to quote the words of the Marquess of Hastings, "who was a man of head as well as of courage, succeeded in making the soobadarship hereditary in his family, maintaining in other respects towards the Peishwa relations of fealty with some pecuniary payments."\*

The British Indian Government negotiated a treaty with this hereditary Subadar of Jhansi in 1817. The treaty which was ratified by the Governor-General on the 18th day of November, 1817, distinctly laid down in its second article that

"The British Government, with a view to confirm the fidelity and attachment of the government of Jhansie consents to acknowledge and hereby constitutes Row Ram Chund, his heirs and successors, hereditary rulers of the territory enjoyed by the late Row Sheo Bhow at the period of the commencement of the British Government," etc.

The language of the article of the treaty does not certainly convey the idea of the British Government having made the grant of the territory of Jhansi to its then Subadar Row Ram Chund, or even if it did so, it did not stipulate that it would lapse to the British Government on the failure of heir of the body of the Subadar. But when the last Raja† of Jhansi died on the 21st November, 1853, the kinsman whom he had adopted as his son was not recognised by Dalhousie and so the principality was annexed owing to so-called "lapse." In a Minute, dated the 27th of February, 1854, in which Dalhousie proclaimed the annexation of Jhansi, he wrote :

"There is no heir of the body of the late Raja—there is no heir whatever of any Raja or Subedar of Jhansi with whom the British Government has at any time had relations : the late Raja was never expected by his own people to adopt, and a previous adoption by the Raja, whom the British Government constituted hereditary chief of Jhansi, was not acknowledged by the British Government. Wherefore it follows that the right to refuse to acknowledge the present adoption by Gangadhar Rao is placed beyond question."

It was convenient for the Governor-General to resort to lies and deliberate misrepresentation of facts in order to achieve his end. Major Evans Bell, in his two works on the *Empire in India* and *Prospects and Retrospect of Indian Policy*, has very thoroughly exposed the lies contained in Dalhousie's minute on annexation of Jhansi. He writes :

Of the regularity of the adoption in every point of view there never was any doubt or question raised. . . . Indeed the adoption was recognised as regular and irreversible. ... The decision of

\* Marquess of Hastings' Private Journal, p. 813, Panini Office Reprint.

† The title of Subadar was changed to that of Raja in 1832 during the regime of Lord William Bentinck.

the Government on that point is summed up in the following words, 'The adoption was good for the conveyance of private rights, though not for the transfer of the Principality.' ...

"... by the treaty of 1817, it was certainly not contemplated by either party to the treaty that the heir of a Soobadar of Jhansi could under any circumstances fail to be his successor. No other law was intended or thought of except the Hindu law of inheritance, in which adoption is an ordinary and essential incident. No article or stipulation in the treaty gave us the right to interfere with the operation of the Hindu law, to mutilate it or to substitute any other law of descent."<sup>\*</sup>

Dalhousie, in the minute above referred to, quoted a memorandum written by Sir Charles Metcalfe in 1837 as an authority for the prerogative of confirming or invalidating adoption in dependent states. But Major Bell has no difficulty in exposing that Dalhousie was not honest in his citation of the authority of Metcalfe. For he wrote that Metcalfe's

"opinion, as may be very easily shown," was directly contradictory of that supposed imperial right.

"Lord Metcalfe, in reference to the Chiefs of Bundelcund, observes that there is a wide distinction to be drawn between 'sovereign princes' and 'jagheerdars,' between those in possession of hereditary sovereignties in their own right, and those who hold grants of land or public revenue, by gift from a sovereign or paramount power."

Then quoting *in extenso* from Metcalfe's memorandum, Bell wrote:

"It will be observed how restricted a right of resumption is allowed by Lord Metcalfe. Even in a case of Jagheerdars, he considers that the sovereign only has the power of refusing to sanction adoptions, when '*the terms of the grant limit succession to heirs male of the body.*' But although this paragraph is quoted by Lord Dalhousie in support of his argument for the annexation of Jhansi, it is obvious that it was intended to refer to a totally different class of possessions, and moreover, if Jhansi were reducible to the category of Jagheers or grants of land, there is no limitation of the grant, confining its 'succession to heirs male of the body'

"But the Rajah of Jhansi was clearly not a Jagheerdar, nor did he, as erroneously stated several times in the late Governor-General's Minute, hold his Principality as a grant, nor did either his father Sheo Rao Bhow, or his nephew Ram Chand Rao receive it as a 'gift' from the British Government."<sup>†</sup>

"There was no gift, because Ram Chand Rao was already in possession, there was no pretension to the relations of sovereign and subject, for there already existed relations of amity and defensive alliance; there was no grant made, no sunnud issued, but a new treaty was concluded between two states. The Rajah of Jhansi was not a Jagheerdar, 'but a hereditary ruler,' a Hindu Prince..."<sup>§</sup>

Referring to the adoption in 1835 which, Dalhousie wrote, "was not acknowledged by the British Government," Bell said:

"The facts are very different.

"There was a disputed succession in 1835, there were four claimants. *The fact of the adoption was denied* by the adverse parties. ...

"It is to be observed, therefore, that in 1835 the adoption or nomination was doubtful, in 1859 the adoption was not doubtful, ... There is no parallel here, no precedent can be founded on the decision of 1835.

\* *The Empire in India*, pp. 202-203.

† *Ibid.*, p. 205.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

"The fact is, that the settlement of 1835 was not a decision of our Government at all, but that of a certain party in the Jhansi Durbar. The only decision at which our Government arrived was the decision of not deciding, interposing or even advising in the dispute. The Political Agent was authorised to recognise Raghonath Rao, the deceased Rajah's uncle, who was in actual possession, but no opinion was given as to his right, and these qualifying expressions were added. 'It being presumed that *he is able to establish his authority*, and that his succession will be acknowledged by disinterested parties at Jhansi'."\*

In his *Retrospects and Prospects of Indian Policy* (p. 24), Bell wrote :

"We have seen how eagerly Lord Dalhousie accepted an imaginary chain of precedents offered to him for general use. Sattara and Nagpore were annexed on the strength of those precedents. To aid in the particular destruction of the petty State of Jhansi, he tried to extract a direct precedent from its own annals. There was no such precedent, and he could only create the phantom by a perversion of the facts before him."

But the statesmen of England who were entrusted with the Government of India lacked all sense of justice and humanity when dealing with the people and princes of India. They annexed Jhansi with a light heart, but they did not reckon the cost they had to pay for this annexation when the Rani of Jhansi in 1858 took the field against the troops led by British officers.

## CHAPTER XC

### OTHER ANNEXATIONS BY LAPSE

In 1849, Sambaipur in the Central Provinces (now transferred to Bihar and Orissa), and Jaitpur in Bundelkhund were annexed by Dalhousie on the doctrine of "lapse." Applying the same principle, Dalhousie absorbed Tanjore in 1855.\*

Major Evans Bell wrote :

"Wallajah, who found the British in possession only of Madras and Cuddalore, made successive grants, by *sunnud*, of Poonamallee and other talooks, to round off the Company's domain, and in 1763 he made over to his allies the district formerly called the Jaghire, now the Zillah of Chingleput, with a revenue of eighteen lacks of rupees. The English Company, though rapidly acquiring a superiority of material power, were still technically and formally feudatories of the Nawab, and held all their territory, except the town of Madras, as jaghires under *sunnud* from him as sovereign of the country : and these technical and formal relations between the two parties were not only left intact by the treaty of 1801, but have never been disputed or questioned either before or since the death of the late Nawab in 1855....."†

On the death of the last Nawab Muhammad Ghaus of Carnatic in October, 1855, Azim Jah was not granted that title. At that time Lord Harris was Governor of Madras. In one of his minutes, he wrote that

"the semblance of royalty, without any of the power, is a mockery of authority which must be

\* Major Evans Bell writes :

"The highest legal authority in England, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, emphatically denounced the Tanjore spoliation. . . ."

Then in a footnote to the above, he adds :

"Kamachi Bai, the senior widow of the Rajah of Tanjore, filed a bill in the Supreme Court of Madras, to recover possession of her deceased husband's private property, which had been sequestered by the local Government. The Court decided in her favour. The Government of Madras carried the case in appeal before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The decree of the Supreme Court of Madras was reversed, because the Lords of the Privy Council held that the seizure was 'an act of State,' and therefore not questionable in any municipal court. But Lord Kingsdown, who delivered the judgment, made use of the following emphatic language :

"It is extremely difficult to discover in these papers any ground of legal right on the part of the East India Company, or of the Crown of Great Britain, to the possession of this Raj, or of any part of the property of the Rajah on his death, and, indeed, the seizure was denounced by the Attorney-General (who, from circumstances explained to us at the hearing, appeared as Counsel for the Respondents, and not in his official character for the Appellants) as a most violent and unjustifiable measure. The Rajah was an independent sovereign of territories undoubtedly minute, and bound by treaties to a powerful neighbour, which left him, practically, little power of free action, but he did not hold his territory, such as it was, as a fief of the British Crown, or of the East India Company, nor does there appear to have been any pretence for claiming it, on the death of the Rajah without a son, by any legal title, either as an escheat or as *bona vacantia*."

† *The Empire in India*, p. 97.



pernicious—that it is impolitic and unwise to allow a pageant to continue, which, though it has been politically harmless, may at any time become a nucleus for sedition and agitation.”

Dalhousie endorsed this minute of Harris and so one ancient royal house of India was wiped out of existence.

It has been said by an English writer that

“one cannot fail to be struck with the frequency of death without heirs among Indian sovereigns from the moment when the policy of annexation is proclaimed by a Governor-General.”\*

There was not much honesty when States were annexed on the pretext of *Lapse*. It is not in India alone but in Europe also that the aristocracy or well-to-do classes are often devoid of male heirs begotten of their body. This phenomenon has been the subject of discussion amongst biologists and economists. It may be that many members of the aristocracy, leading debauched lives, are not blessed with children. But the Hindu law in such cases provided a remedy by what is called “*Adoption*.” Not to recognize adoption suggested foul play. An English writer says :

“The doctrine of lapse was not quite new. John Bull has never been averse to taking possession of a nice estate which cost him nothing. From 1836 to 1840, Ludiana, Ferozepore, Jaloun, and a few others had lapsed. But with Dalhousie in power, the number grew. And Providence seemed strangely kind to the advocates of lapse. The number of deaths amongst the princes, which deaths brought annexations, was remarkable. The assassin’s dagger or the poison cup, at a certain time and amongst a certain type of prince, could hardly have been more fatal than was ‘death from natural causes.’ ‘Minor absorptions can hardly be reckoned.’—P. 69 of Mr. Clarke’s *British India and England’s Responsibilities*, London, 1902.”

We have shown in a previous chapter how the British invaders of Afghanistan were bribing the Afghans to ‘bring in the heads of one or two of the *Mufsid*s’ by the offer of ‘10,000 rupees for each head, or even 15,000 rupees.’†

Is it unthinkable that resort might have been made to the same procedure towards the Indian princes without heirs which was so successful in Afghanistan? Is not the frequency of deaths without heirs among Indian sovereigns, when Dalhousie announced his policy of annexation by “lapse,” suggestive of foul play ?

\* Ludlow’s *British India*, Vol. II, p. 190.

† Kaye’s *History of the War in Afghanistan*, 4th Edition, Vol. II, p. 218.

## CHAPTER XCI

### CONFISCATION OF BERAR

Dalhousie had dealt blows to the Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists. He also intended to wipe out the existence of the Muhammadan powers of India. When he came out to India, there were two large dominions under Muhammadan suzerains in India. These were, in the north, the Kingdom of Oude, and, in the south, the Nizam's dominions. The revenues of each of these principalities amounted to several millions of pounds sterling, for they were very fertile tracts of land and one of them at least was known to contain mines. It was difficult for the Governor-General to restrain his greed. So he intended to swallow up both these principalities. Wrote Robert Knight :

"About the year 1851 the policy in the ascendent at Calcutta was that of 'getting rid of intervening Principalities.' Every native state was considered merely 'an exceptional jurisdiction,' . . . . . The ruling maxim declared that the existence of so many sovereignties and chiefships, interspersed with our own territory, was in many ways inimical to good government, and to the welfare and prosperity of the people, and that, 'on every fair occasion, their number ought to be diminished.' . . . Native States could not be reformed—they were incorrigible and even if they could, the task would not be a politic or profitable one for us to undertake. *The two great Mussalman States, Hyderabad and Oude, were marked down for annexation, and the process of undermining them, as the Blue Books tell us, was only delayed by the wars in the Punjab and Burmah.* When the time for business came, Oude was annexed, Hyderabad was pushed on the road to ruin, and Lord Dalhousie waited for 'the crash'".\*

Dalhousie, with his policy of annexing Native States, eagerly turned his attention to Hyderabad. Because there was something rotten in the administration of this state, he thought therefore he had a right to absorb it. The language which he used in addressing the Nizam was the most insulting one imaginable.

Because the Nizam was weak, he had to tamely submit to it. To force the Nizam to maintain the Contingent and to pay for it in addition to the Subsidiary force which he had to maintain and pay for by the Treaty of 1800, Dalhousie wrote personally to the Nizam a letter on the 6th June, 1851, in which such insulting expressions were used as it was dangerous for the Nizam "to provoke the resentment of the British Government," "whose power can crush you at its will," and telling him that "the independence of his sovereignty" stood in "imminent danger." The Nizam was advised to disband "those turbulent mercenaries, the Arab soldiery, and also to make an effort for "the early liquidation of the accumulated debt." If he was unable to do so, he must "forthwith make over" to the British Government certain frontier districts.

As said before, the Nizam was weak and so he had to tamely submit to the insults heaped upon him by the Governor-General. In fact it seems that Dalhousie,

realizing the weakness of the Nizam, went on adding insults to injuries on that ruler.

The Nizam was not indebted to the Indian Government. But then the alliance between the two Governments resembled that of the Giant and the Dwarf. The Government of India had been regularly and mercilessly bleeding the Musalman ruler of the Deccan.

But up to the middle of the nineteenth century the affairs of the Nizam were not so well managed as they ought to have been. His territories were the scenes of fights and bloodshed. Referring to Berar, writes a well-known Anglo-Indian author :

"Petty local revolts were common: the Deshmukhs stood up for their hereditary rights, the farmers took what they could by main force, and there was frequent faction-fighting in the towns between Rajputs and Mussalmans. . . . .

"This country was harried from time to time by bands of men under leaders who set up in defiance of the government on various pretexts, but always with the real object of plundering. . . . .

Throughout these troubles the behaviour of the Hindu Deshmukhs and other paragana officers was most significantly treasonable against the Nizam's Government. They did their best to thwart his commanders and to abet the Pretenders, although the rebel bands plundered and ravished wherever they went."

The Nizam had already been paying a large sum for the maintenance of the Company's troops under the subsidiary alliance. But these troops were of no use to him to put down the local petty revolts in his dominion. He was being pressed to have a contingent in his employ for the purpose of putting down these local revolts.

"The Nizam was told that he was bound by treaty, which was untrue, to maintain the contingent, and he was told, which was likewise untrue, that the duties performed by the contingent were not such duties as devolved properly on the subsidiary force. Thus the Nizam was given to understand . . . . . that if he gave up the contingent he would practically lose all military protection whatever, and all the benefits of the Treaty of 1800."†

He was unjustly made to pay for the Contingent, with reference to which the Marquis of Hastings wrote, as published in "Hyderabad Papers", 1824 :

"It is perfectly true that these troops are in fact more ours than those of the Sovereign by whom they are maintained. Now would it be consonant to wisdom, or to the trust reposed in us by the Honourable Company, that we should sacrifice such a security to a caumitical point of equity ?"

In the same Minute he also says that it would be "impolitic to let an over-refinement cause our open abrogation of such an inexpensive addition to our strength."

But then to maintain this "most preposterous example of our national nepotism," as the Contingent was called by Mr. Knight, the Muhammadan ruler of the Deccan Hyderabad was made to run into debt to the East India Company, and to obtain satisfaction for that debt, demands were made upon his fertile frontier districts.

It was under such pretexts and pretences that the Nizam was deprived of his richest province. But Berar was a cotton growing country and that was the secret reason of Dalhousie's confiscating it. Although it was solemnly declared that the

\* Lyall's *Berar Gazetteer* (1870), pp. 181-182.

† *The Statesman*, July 1, 1880, p. 178.

occupation of Berar would be only temporary, it was never restored to him to whom it legally belonged. Half a century later, another Viceroy—a model Christian, because he was the son of a Christian divine and so reared on the teachings of the Bible from his very cradle, accomplished what Dalhousie had left undone. Curzon made the Nizam give up Berar in permanent lease to the Christian Indian Government.

Of course it was the intention of Dalhousie to annex the whole dominion of the Nizam to the British Government and the confiscation of Berar was meant to be the preliminary step—the introduction of the thin end of the wedge, as it were, into the body politic of the Nizam. But fortunately for the latter, in Sir Salar Jung he possessed a minister who was equal to Dalhousie in diplomacy and statecraft. So it was no easy thing for the Scotch Christian Laird to overreach the Muhammadan statesman who was at the helm of the Nizam's affairs. And this happy circumstance explains why Hyderabad did not share the same fate as Oudh.

## CHAPTER XCII

### THE ANNEXATION OF OUDH

Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Sindh, in his journal, dated October 8, 1850, wrote :

"When Dalhousie's father was Commander-in-Chief here [in India], he visited the King of Oude at Lucknow, and made a point of introducing her ladyship, which the King did not understand at all, and fancied the Laird wanted to sell her! After a short time His Majesty of Oude said to his attendants. 'that will do, take her away!'"

Commenting on the above, Sir William Napier, the brother and biographer of the conqueror of Sindh, wrote :

"This should certainly have figured among the reasons for annexing Oude. It would have been stronger than anything yet adduced for that spoliation.""

The annexation of Oudh which was the last annexation effected by Dalhousie, was the most unjustifiable one from every point of view—whether moral or political. Almost all right-thinking politicians—not compatriots or friends and admirers of that Scotch Laird—have condemned that annexation in most unmeasured terms—some calling it even 'Dacoity in Excelsis.' Historians have referred to this annexation as the most important contributing cause of the Sepoy Mutiny. It is, therefore, necessary to know the facts and circumstances which preceded the annexation of Oudh.

Oudh was one of those principalities which were erected when the Mughal Empire was *in extremis*—when the regal sceptre was about to pass away from the hands of the descendants of Babar and Akbar. The early rulers of Oudh were called Nawab Vazirs. They were not independent sovereigns, but were considered to be the hereditary ministers of the Mughal Emperors of Delhi. Their position was, in this respect, somewhat analogous to that of the Peshwas in Maratha history. But the rulers of Oudh gradually threw away the mask of dependence on the Delhi Emperors. And when the English succeeded in gaining a footing in the country, they encouraged the rulers of Oudh to become independent of the influence of Delhi. The climax was reached when the Marquess of Hastings made the Oudh ruler "King" and styled him "His Majesty."

Although the Oudh ruler was promoted to the kingship, yet no liberty of action in any shape or form was accorded to him; he was made to depend on the English more and more every day. All semblance of power was being taken away from him.

Having drawn the ruler of Oudh into the net of what the British called friendship, they took delight in clipping his wings and making him helpless.

The rulers of Oudh were sold by the British—nay, they were being bled, whenever the British required their blood to improve their own anaemic condition. Wrote Henry Lawrence in the *Calcutta Review* for January, 1845 :

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\* The Life and Opinions of General Sir Charles James Napier, G. C. B., by Lieutenant-General Sir W. Napier, K. C. B. 2nd Edition, 1857, Vol. IV p. 296.

"No portion of India has been more discussed in England than Oude. Afghanistan and the Punjab are modern questions, but for half a century, country gentlemen have been possessed of a vague idea of a province of India, nominally independent in its home relations but periodically used as a wet-nurse to relieve the difficulties of the East India Company's finances. The several attacks that were made on Warren Hastings, Lord Wellesley, and the Marquis of Hastings, have all served to keep up the interest of the Oude question. ... We are among those unfashionable people who consider that politics and morals can never be safely separated; that an honest private individual must necessarily be an honest official, and *vice-versa*; but we confess that we have been staggered by a study of Oude transactions. Most assuredly Warren Hastings, Lord Teignmouth, Lord Wellesley, Lord Hastings, and Lord Auckland would never have acted in private life, as they did in the capacity of Governors towards prostrate Oude. ...

"Oude affords but a discreditable chapter in our Indian annals, and furnishes a fearful warning of the lengths to which a statesman may be carried, when once he substitutes expediency and his own view of public advantage, for the simple rule of right and wrong. The facts furnished by every writer on Oude affairs all testify to the same point, that British interference with that province has been as prejudicial to its Court and people as it has been disgraceful to the British name. To quote the words of Colonel Sutherland, an able and temperate writer, 'there is no State in India with whose Government we have interfered so systematically and so uselessly as with that of Oude.' He most justly adds, 'this interference has been more in favour of men than of measures;' ... In short, wherever we turn, we see written in distinct characters the blighting influences of our interference.

"If ever there was a device for insuring malgovernment, it is that of a Native Ruler and Minister, both relying on foreign bayonets, and directed by a British Resident. Even if all three were able, virtuous, and considerate, still the wheels of Government could hardly move smoothly. ... Each of the three may work incalculable mischief, but no one of them can do good if thwarted by the others."

The above is a true description of the unhappy and unenviable position in which the rulers of Oude had been placed by the British Government of India. It is not necessary to mention in detail the transactions of the English with Oudh from the time of Warren Hastings. But it is only proper here to mention that that which gave the English what they considered to be their right in meddling with the affairs of Oudh was the Treaty of 1801 whereby the British Government bound itself "to defend the territories which will remain to his excellency the Vazir against all foreign and domestic enemies." All the troubles of Oudh originated from and were due to this interference of the British. Half a century's interference of the British with the affairs of that State did not lead to their improvement in any way. When Lord Dalhousie assumed charge of the office of Governor-General of India, Oudh affairs had come to such a pass that the Governor-General thought that they required his interference. But this interference meant extinction of that kingdom. But before accomplishing the object so dear to his heart, he deputed a diplomatist who was a successful catcher of thugs and thieves to report on its affairs. Sir William Sleeman was the diplomatist chosen for this task. He was sent as political resident to Lucknow.

The English had been long casting their eyes on Oudh with greed. They were coveting it. The author of the article on the "physical capabilities of Oude" in the *Calcutta Review* for June, 1856, wrote:

"No climate can, however, be finer than that of Oude during the cold season,"...

Then referring to the climate of the Terace forest, the same writer proceeded :

"From October up to the commencement of the rainy season no climate of Europe is more delightful and 'were it not, we quote our own words published a year ago in a Calcutta journal, 'for the arbitrary government of the king, which is a serious obstacle to every enterprise, a bold and venturesome planter would within a very short period be able to make a fortune'...

"This subject, one so important for proving the capabilities of Oude, we some time ago discussed in a daily journal nearly in the following words:

"The enterprising merchant, if his movements were not hampered by the vexatious obstacles, which the feudal lords of the country, as well as the native officers of the king, invariably throw in the way of all commercial undertakings, would not fail to make a large fortune, if he collected and despatched the many articles of commerce which are now allowed to be wasted unprofitably."\*

Regarding the fertility of Oudh a British writer theorized as follows :

"The fertility of many portions of the land has often, strange as it may appear, been enhanced by the oppression of the Governors of districts, and the mutinous dispositions of the land-holders. These being at war with their sovereign have escaped into the jungles, and their lands being allowed to lie uncultivated, they are enabled to recover themselves from over-cropping. They are perhaps converted into meadows for pasturage, and while they are such, are manured by the dung of the cattle and deer, and by being swamped in the rainy season, are impregnated with the above-mentioned [saltish] deposits."†

Without annexation, the exploitation of Oudh by the English was not possible. Hence the absorption of this kingdom was deemed of primary importance by the British sojourners who were commanded by the God whom they worshipped, "Thou shalt not steal."

But the natives of Oudh were against their province being annexed to the territory of the East India Company. At a private meeting of 200 chiefs which took place on the 18th August, 1855,

"It was determined to spend £150,000 a year to prevent annexation, by bribery and agitation. Kasim, an old chief of ninety-five, was elected president and spoke two hours till he fainted. He had been born, he said, under the Oude crescent, the greatness of the royal house was fallen, but their people still respected them. It was of no avail, he said, to resist the Company. If the firman of annexation should overtake them, they must bow to it, but fight meanwhile with the endurance of the ox and the fox's cunning. The Nazarenes love gold, the men of Oude loved their wild freedom more. Let them give gold to the Christians from the royal and private treasuries—to hungry chiefs, to greedy agitators. Were not these men the same as their predecessors? The chiefs sided with him. But bolder counsels were urged in other quarters. Pamphlets appealing to Musalman fanaticism were largely circulated. Of one of these, "The Sword the Key of Heaven and Hell," 300 copies were seized by the Indian Government of Cawnpore."§

The Anglo-Indians were crying aloud for the annexation of Oudh. Some of those Britishers who had been in the pay of the King of Oudh and had eaten his salt, forgetting all sense of gratitude and honour, if ever they possessed any, wrote books inventing alleged acts of oppression and cruelty of the King. One of such books saw the light of day in London in 1855. It is named, "The Private Life of an Eastern

\* *The Calcutta Review*, Vol. XXVI (1856), pp. 422-23.

† *The Calcutta Review*, Vol. XXVI (1856), pp. 415-416.

§ Ludlow's *British India*, Vol. II, pp. 208-209.

King. By a Member of the Household of his late Majesty, Nassir-u-Deen, King of Oude."

The writer was the portrait painter to the last King of Oudh, and so he had an opportunity of observing the interior of Court life in Oudh. Because this European was trusted by his Musalman royal master, therefore he took delight in betraying his trust and abused the King. It was in reviewing this work that the *Calcutta Review* of July, 1855, which was at that time, we believe, edited by the celebrated Scotch Christian Missionary, Dr. Duff, published an article, entitled "The Age of Conquest: is it Past?" The writer of the article advocated the conquest and annexation of Oudh, He wrote :

"The age of conquests has *not* passed, nor is it passing, it proceeds, with greater or less rapidity, in every corner of the earth. ..England, while repudiating conquest, goes on conquering, annexes a new territory in every half decade, and annihilates some barbarian tribe in every two years. It is true, the last named power believes herself free of any such design. She does not, however, draw back her hand, and the only consequence of her prudery is, that her conquests are without system, made often at the wrong moment, and generally three times as costly as they need have been. She destroys the dynasty of Runjeet, and leaves the seeds of rebellion, because she will not 'conquer.' She annexes Pegu, and makes a virtue of abstaining from the 'conquest' of the remainder of the kingdom. In short, despite Manchester men and able editors, cotton manufacturers and philanthropic dreamers, she is as much pledged to advance as the Romanoffs or the States."

Then the European writer dilated on the virtues of conquering states and compared them with those which are "non-conquering." He wrote :

"The Oriental Empires have ceased to conquer, and are ceasing to exist. Everywhere around is the sound of the crumbling of rotten thrones."

Then he philosophised :

"If then, throughout the world, progress and conquest are in fact united, is it not just possible that they may also be united of right? Is there not some faint probability, that conquest may be right as well as inevitable, and that the Manchester school are committing not only a blunder but a crime in resisting it."

Then, referring to Oudh, he wrote :

"This kingdom of Oude is perhaps the best illustration of English blundering on the subject of conquest."

After having alluded to the existence of oppressions in Oudh, the writer proceeded :

"Here we have a vast scene of oppression . . . This alone, upon our principles, would justify conquest, having for its sole excuse the termination of such oppression. But there is more than this. The oppression exists solely because we arm and defend the oppression . . . We *can* stop the oppression. Two lines in the *Gazette* would banish the whole crew, King, eunuchs, women and chuckladars, into their natural insignificance. There is no army in Oude. The Hindu population is wholly on our side. The relatives of our sepoy, of both creeds, are most anxious for the annexation, and the remaining Mussalmans are not sufficiently united or sufficiently aggrieved for hostile action. Two regiments of Europeans would be sufficient, and two regiments of Europeans we can spare.

"But one argument remains.—It is alleged by some whose Hinduism leads them to sympathize deeply with the Native Princes that to annex Oude would be to violate engagements. We may



deprive the King of the power to do evil, but we may not strip him of his revenues. They are to be paid in order that he may live in luxury. It needs little argument to shew that these revenues belong to the country, and not to any individual house. His hereditary right is one of government, not property."

The European writer concluded his article by saying that

"If conquest is occasionally right in itself, if it is specially right, when, by refraining from it, we are supporting crime, if we are so supporting crime in Oude, and if the claims of the only person who professed to have rights are nil, then Oude, we conceive, should be annexed. There is no cause for delay. Even as we write, there is a faint sound of a religious war, which, at all hazards, and at any cost, must be prevented. The only method of preventing it is by annexation."

After the annexation of Oudh, Dalhousie left India. It was the last principality in India that was annexed to the dominion of the East India Company.

The rise of the British supremacy may be said to have reached its last stage with the administration of Dalhousie. Sir Edwin Arnold, in his history of the Marquis of Dalhousie's administration of British India, writes :

"The administration of British India, under the Marquis of Dalhousie, consummated a policy, and closed a period. . . . Beneath his rule the territory of 'the British merchants trading in the East' received its latest extension, and at his departure, the sun of their power verged to a stormy setting."

But for the Second Afghan War, which took place some twenty-three years, and the third Burmese War some thirty years after Dalhousie's departure, the boundaries and contents of the Indian Empire would not have exceeded the limits assigned to them by him. His acquisitions by fraud and force and "bad faith" were meant to be the last of empire-building in India.

## CHAPTER XCIII

### REFLECTIONS ON THE COMPANY'S CHARTER OF 1853

On every occasion of the renewal of the charter of the Company, the authorities paraded their philanthropic motives to make the world believe that India was to be governed not for the benefit of the natives of England but for that of the people of India. Thus in 1813, it was considered to be the *duty* of England, "to promote the interest and happiness of the inhabitants of the British dominions" in India, and so a sum of not less than one lac of rupees in each year was ordered to be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and encouragement of the learned natives of India. In 1833, it was enacted,

"That no native of the said territories, nor any natural born subject of his Majesty resident therein, shall by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, color or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the said Company."

But between 1833 and 1853, the British dominions in India had swelled to such a large extent by means of fraud and force, which had been twice declared by the British Parliament to be "repugnant to the wish, the honour, and the policy of" England, that it was not considered any longer necessary to keep up the mask of philanthropy. It is, therefore, that the Charter Act of 1853 does not contain any section which may be construed in any way as conferring any privileges on the natives of India. It was tacitly understood that India was not to be governed for the benefit of its inhabitants. India was to be regularly exploited and its natives to be Anglicised. These are the impressions which are forced on one's mind by reading the voluminous evidence recorded by the Select Committees of both Houses of the British Parliament in the inquiry preceding the renewal of the Charter. Much stress was laid on public works—which meant Railway construction—education and spread of Christianity. Of course, the Railways would benefit England and its shop-keepers. Education was not to be based on national lines, but it was to be imparted from political motives to make the natives loyal. Evangelization of the Indians was meant to achieve the same end.\*

One of the alleged causes of the Mutiny is said to have been the alarm felt by the natives of India at their religions and religious institutions being in danger of subversion. The manner in which Christian ministers of faith were encouraged to give evidence before the Parliamentary committees and the insulting tone in which they were accustomed to speak of the religious institutions, ceremonies and prophets of the natives would lend color to the belief of the natives that the Government of

\* See my *History of Education in India under the Rule of the East India Company*, pp. 105—106.

the country wished to subvert their religions. In his evidence on 22nd March, 1832, Captain T. Macan told the Commons' Committee that

"We have never interfered directly with their religion, though they begin to complain, that if we do not directly interfere, we at least wink at, if not encourage, interference."

Then he was asked :

"To what circumstances do you particularly refer?—I refer to the sentiments of many talented natives, Mahomedans, who have spoken to me of the countenance shown by Government to Missionaries and to the excesses to which missionaries have gone in censuring their religious habits, even in the streets. One of those missionaries mentioned to the mixed population he was addressing, 'that they hoped for pardon' through the intercession of Mahomet, but that he was in Hell at present, and that they all would follow him if they persisted in their belief of his doctrines."

Every countenance was given to the Missionaries and Christianity, and nothing was done for Muhammadanism or Hinduism or for the institutions of either faith.

Under these circumstances it is small wonder that the Charter Act of 1853 and the conduct of the Parliamentary Committees in reporting evidence of the witnesses examined by them, were in no small measure responsible for the terrible catastrophe which destroyed the existence of the Company of Merchants to whom was entrusted the government of India.\*

## CHAPTER XCIV

### THE INDIAN MUTINY OF 1857

Canning, who succeeded Dalhousie as the Governor-General of India, was destined to be the last nominee of the East India Company to that high appointment. Notwithstanding the self-laudation of that Scotch "Laird of Cockpen," it was obvious that the high-handed manner in which that Marquis had conducted the affairs of India did not bode good to that country. It did not require the vision of a prophet to see the cloud on the political horizon of India, not bigger than a man's hand, threatening the fate of that land. Lord Canning saw it and said so in England when he was appointed as Governor-General of India. And not long after he had assumed that office in March, 1856, his prediction came to be fulfilled by the outbreak known as the Indian Mutiny of 1857.

Just as fifty years before, the Mutiny at Vellore was due to the English riding roughshod over the religious and caste prejudices, usages and customs of the non-Christians, so after half a century, when they had brought more territory of India under the rule of their countrymen, they considered it no longer necessary to pay any attention to the feelings and sentiments of the Hindus and Muhammadans. Christianity and Christian missionaries were being openly patronised by the Company's Government. The Indian people naturally felt alarmed that the Christian Government meant to destroy their religious and social institutions. Mr. Nolan\* writes :

"The Government became less careful of offending the religious prejudices of the soldiers. Instances had occurred of these prejudices having been invaded in various ways without creating revolts, but the Government did not know that in every such case bad feeling was created, which was quietly but actively diffused."

It was in this spirit of neglecting to consult the religious prejudices of Hindu and Muhammadan Sepoys that greased cartridges were served out to them. On the 22nd of January, 1857, Captain Wright of the 10th Native Infantry at Dum-Dum reported that

"a very unpleasant feeling existed among the native soldiers who were at the depot for instruction, regarding the grease used in preparing the cartridges, some evil disposed person having spread a report that it consisted of a mixture of the fat of pigs and cows."

There is no denying the fact that the report spread was founded on truth, as no precaution had been taken to ensure the absence of any objectionable fat.

The "greased cartridge" served the purpose of a blazing torch applied to the inflammable material that had been collected together by Dalhousie and his predecessors.

In its issue of 9th August, 1896, under the heading "The Bengalee Press, how to deal with it," wrote the *Pioneer*, a well-known Anglo-Indian daily :

\* *History of the British Empire*, Vol. II, p. 706

"We know how Englishmen within the memory of living men treated their own newspaper writers...If a gentle and graceful writer forgot himself so far as to call the Prince Regent 'an Adonis of forty,' he got two years' 'hard.' If a clergyman praised the French revolution and advocated Parliamentary reform and fair representation, he was condemned to work in iron manacles, to wade in sludge among the vilest criminals."

The writer advocated the infliction of the same punishment on an Indian who dared to write on the Indian Mutiny of 1857.

It has been very unsafe for an Indian to write on that subject with that freedom and impartiality which its importance demands and deserves. We shall, therefore, content ourselves by quoting the views of Britishers as to the causes of that event in the history of Christian rule in India.

The name of Mr. Drummond is not so well known in India as it deserves to be. He was a member of Parliament during the years which witnessed the Indian Mutiny, and the transfer of India from the hands of merchants to the Crown. As a Parliamentarian, he had not such a brilliant career as John Bright. But, nevertheless, his sympathy for the natives of India was as genuine as that of the great Quaker statesman. Therefore, no apology is needed for the following quotation from his speech delivered in 1858 :

"Mr. Rees states, in his *Narrative*, that the conduct of many of our young officers towards the natives is cruel and tyrannical, while the *London Quarterly* declares that the behavior of Europeans is marked by a high degree of pride and insolence. Lord William Bentinck said, that the result of his observation was, that the European generally knew little or nothing of the customs and manners of the people and Mr. Fraser Tytler asserts, that the servants of the Company are the least able to supply correct information upon these subjects. Now, if we are proud of our aristocracy and mindful of their dignity, how can we think that these things do not rankle in the breasts of men who can trace up their hereditary rank and their possessions to a period anterior to the time of Alexander the Great? Are we so foolish as to imagine that, because they do not retort and insult upon the moment, they do not feel it? We may depend upon it, that the Italian proverb is true, in India as everywhere else—'Vengeance sleeps long, but never dies.'

"The people of India having been subjected to such treatment, is it surprising that they should hate us? Mr. Fraser, a gentleman quoted by Mr. Norton, states, that the people generally are dissatisfied, and that they have too much cause to be so. He adds, that there is disaffection enough for half a dozen rebellions. . . .

"Now the root of the whole evil is the doctrine that India is a country to be *exploited* for the benefit of the Civil Service. If we are going to look upon India as we have looked upon it hitherto as a mere place of plunder for English officials, we shall surely lose it, and shall deserve to lose it."\*

"*Vengeance sleeps long, but never dies.*" We are accustomed to hear Englishmen say that England has made India, that India never existed as India until the natives of England went there, and that the Muhammadans were cutting the throats of the Hindus. If such are the facts, then the natives of India should have been grateful to the natives of England and there was no occasion for the Mutiny to occur. But let a few British writers speak of the early British administration of India. It is not necessary to quote Burke and Sheridan, who exposed the maladministration of Warren Hastings, for their

\* Mr. Drummond's Speech on the Government of India, June, 7, 1858.

speeches are well known to all readers of English literature. Besides, they lived in the 18th century. Let us see what British authors of the 19th century have said of the British administration of India before the Mutiny period.

Herbert Spencer is not a sentimentalist. He is a philosopher and a deep thinker. His writings will last as long as the English language itself. Listen to his remarks then on the British administration of India :

"The Anglo-Indians of the last century whom Burke described as 'Birds of prey and passage in India' showed themselves only a shade less cruel than their prototypes of Peru and Mexico. Imagine how black must have been their deeds, when even the Directors of the Company admitted 'that the vast fortunes acquired in the inland trade have been obtained by a scene of the most tyrannical and oppressive conduct that was ever known in any age or country. Conceive the atrocious state of society described by Vansittart, who tells us that the English compelled the natives to buy or sell at just what rates they pleased on pain of flogging or confinement. Judge to what a pass things must have come when, in describing a journey, Warren Hastings says: 'Most of the petty towns and *Serais* were deserted at our approach.' A cold-blooded treachery was the established policy of the authorities. Princes were betrayed into war with each other, and one of them, having been helped to overcome his antagonist, was then himself dethroned for some alleged misdemeanour. Always some muddied stream was at hand as a pretext for official wolves. Dependent Chiefs possessing coveted lands were impoverished by exorbitant demands for tribute and their ultimate inability to meet these demands was construed into a treasonable offence punished by deposition. Even down to our own day kindred iniquities are continued. Down to our own day, too, are continued the grievous salt monopoly, and the pitiless taxation, that wring from the poor ryots nearly half the produce of the soil. Down to our own day continues the cunning despotism which uses native soldiers to maintain and extend native subjection, a despotism under which, not many years since, a regiment of sepoys was deliberately massacred, for refusing to march without proper clothing. Down to our own day, the police authorities league with wealthy scamps, and allow the machinery of the law to be used for the purposes of extortion. Down to our own day so-called gentlemen will ride their elephants through the crops of impoverished peasants and will supply themselves with provisions from the native villages without paying for them. And down to our own day, it is common with the people in the interior to run into the woods at sight of a European."

Every educated native of India should try to read Sir John Kaye's History of the Sepoy War, for that gifted historian has given an unprejudiced account of the British administration of India preceding the Mutiny. In describing the work of Dalhousie in India, Kaye writes :

"He (Lord Dalhousie) never doubted that it was good alike for England and for India that the map of the country which he had been sent to govern should present one surface of Red. . . . He commenced his career at a time when the ablest of our public functionaries in India had forsaken the traditions of the old school—the school of Malcolin, of Elphinstone, and of Metcalfe—and stood eager and open-armed to embrace and press closely to them the very doctrine of which they perceived in Dalhousie so vigorous an exponent. . . . As his workmen were admirably suited to his work, so also was the field, to which he was called, the one best adapted to the exercise of his peculiar powers. In no other part of our Empire could his rare administrative capacity have found such scope for development. For he was of an imperious and despotic nature, not submitting to control, and resenting opposition, and in no situation could he have exercised a larger measure of power in the face of so few constitutional checks. His capacities required free

exercise, and it may be doubted whether they would have been fully developed by anything short of this absolute supremacy. And he was successful beyond all example, so far as success is the full accomplishment of one's own desires and intentions. But one fatal defect in his character tainted the stream of his policy at the source, and converted into brilliant errors some of the most renowned of his achievements. No man who is not endowed with a comprehensive imagination can govern India with success. Dalhousie had no imagination. Lacking the imaginative faculty, men, after long years of experience, may come to understand the national character, and a man of lively imagination, without such experience, may readily apprehend it after the intercourse of a few weeks. But in neither way did Dalhousie ever come to understand the genius of the people among whom his lot was cast. He had but one idea of them—an idea of a people habituated to the despotism of a dominant race. He could not understand the tenacity of affection with which they clung to their old traditions. He could not sympathise with the veneration which they felt for their ancient dynasties. He could not appreciate their fidelity to the time honoured institutions and the immemorial usages of the land. He could not see with other men's eyes, or think with others men's brains, or feel with other men's hearts. With the characteristic unimaginativeness of his race he could not for moment divest himself of his individuality, or conceive the growth of ancestral pride and national honour in other breasts than those of the Campbells and the Ramsays.

"And this egotism was cherished and sustained by the prevailing sentiments of the new school of Indian politicians, who as I have said, laughed to scorn the doctrines of the men who had built up the great structure of our Indian Empire, and by the utterances of a Press, which, with rare ability expounded the views of this school, and insisted upon the duty of universal usurpation. Such indeed, was the prevailing tone of the majority, in all ranks from the highest to the lowest, that any one who meekly ventured to ask, 'How would you like it yourself?' was reproached in language little short of that which might be fitly applied to a renegade or a traitor. To suggest that in an Asiatic race there might be a spirit of independence and a love of country, the manifestations of which were honorable in themselves, however inconvenient to us, was commonly to evoke as the very mildest result the imputation of being 'Anti-British,' whilst sometimes the 'true British feeling' asserted itself in a less refined choice of epithets, and those who ventured to sympathise in any way with the people of the East were at once denounced as 'white niggers.' Yet among these very men, so intolerant of anything approaching the assertion of liberty by an Asiatic people, there were some who could well appreciate and sympathise with the aspirations of European bondsmen, and could regard with admiration the struggles of the Italian, the Switzer, or the Pole to liberate himself by a sanguinary contest, from the yoke of the usurper. But the sight of the dark skin sealed up their sympathies. They contended not merely that the love of country, that the spirit of liberty, as cherished by European races, is in India wholly unknown, but that Asiatic nations, and especially the nations of India, have no right to judge what is best for themselves, no right to revolt against the beneficence of a more civilised race of white men, who would think and act for them, and deprive them for their own good, of all their most cherished rights and their most valued possessions."

Says another English writer :

"One of the most graphic of our writers on India, Dr. Russell, has remarked on the indifference manifested in England on the abuse of power, thousands of miles away : how in spite of the marvellous eloquence of Burke and his colleagues, the accusations against Warren Hastings, though of the gravest kind, were received with indifference by the people, because the acts referred to were perpetrated in such a far country, whereas, had they been done in the Channel Island, in Ireland, or in Scotland, the intelligence would have been received with a general burst of indignation. 'To-night I hear,' says the same writer,—it is in 1858—'that the menagerie of the King of Oude, as much his private property as his watch or turban, were sold under discreditable circumstances and his jewels seized and impounded, though we had no more claim on them than

on the Crown diamonds of Russia. Do the English people care for these things? Do they know them? The hundred millions of Hindustan know them well, and care for them too. ..

"With all its glories, conquests, triumphs, spoils, the Government of the East India Company in India was tainted from the very first with mighty vices, and these became more flagrant as time gave to the various abuses the impunity or even the authority derived from prescription. For generation after generation, the great aim and object of the servants of the Company, from the high civil and military functionaries downwards was to squeeze as large as possible a fortune out of the country as quickly as might be, and turn their backs upon it for ever, so soon as that object had been attained, and the last golden harvest had been shaken down from the pagoda tree. In perfect truth has it been said that if the native rulers chastised the people with whips, the European master chastised them with scorpions, and that the subjugated race found the little finger of the Company thicker than the loins of the worst and most dissolute of their native princes. ... None but the wilfully blind could assert or even affect to believe that the English rule in India was popular among the inhabitants."

Who were the Mutineers? They were principally (a) the Marathas, who had been perhaps the greatest sufferers, for the Peshwa had been deposed and his adopted son—Nana Saheb—did not receive any justice at the hands of the East India Company; the Maratha states of Satara, Nagpur and Jhansi were annexed; (b) the Musalmans of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh who witnessed the overthrow of the Royal houses of Delhi and Lucknow; and (c) also the *Purbias* or Hindus of Oudh. It was these three classes which used to furnish sepoys to the East India Company. The sepoys revolted because they saw the destruction of the landed aristocracy of the country, and the ill-treatment their fellow-countrymen received at the hands of the new masters of the land. The causes of the Mutiny may be described to be the "*Bad Faith*" of the British rulers of India towards Indian princes on the one hand, and the ill-treatment of the natives of India by the British ruling class on the other.

It is not necessary to write in detail about the spread of the revolt in the different provinces and towns of India and the manner in which it was put down by the British. There are several admirable works on the subject, the most comprehensive being that of Kaye and Malletson, which may be consulted profitably by those who are interested in it.

The Indian Mutiny could not have been suppressed but for the help given to the British by the Sikhs and the Gurkhas.

Sir John Lawrence was the administrator of the Panjab when the outbreak took place in Delhi, Lucknow and other places in India.

It was thought that the Sikhs who had hardly a decade before been made to lose their independence by the English would have gladly embraced the opportunity afforded by the revolt in Hindustan to join the Mutineers to regain their lost independence from the hands of men of alien race and creed. But such not having been the case was to be attributed to their demoralization under the foreign yoke. How the Sikh Chiefs were treated by their English conquerors is thus described by the Scotch "*Laird of Cockpen*" in writing to the Directors of the East India Company on August 25, 1849 :—

"Stripped of all rank, deprived of all property, reduced, each of them, to a monthly pittance of



two hundred rupees, confined within narrow limits, and then watched, well knowing that an attempt at flight would be made at the risk of their lives.”\*

The two brothers, Sir Henry and Mr. John (afterwards Lord) Lawrence, as members of the Panjab Board, could not pull on together. The former wanted to be fair and just to the Panjab Chiefs and tried to lessen the weight of the chain by which they were held in subjection, whereas the latter wanted to practise refined brutalities on the newly subjugated non-Christian people of the Panjab. No wonder that he found favour with the Governor-General of India, who abolished the Panjab Board, removed Sir Henry Lawrence from the land of the Five Rivers, and made John Lawrence the sole autocrat of that province by appointing him its Chief Commissioner. How heartless and cruel John Lawrence was is to be gathered from his brother Sir Henry's farewell letter to him, dated Lahore, January 20, 1853. He wrote :

“As this is my last day at Lahore, I venture to offer you a few words of advice, which I hope you will take in the spirit it is given in, and that you will believe that, if you preserve the peace of the country and make the people high and low happy, I shall have no regrets that I vacated the field for you. It seems to me that you look on almost all questions affecting Jageerdars and Mafeedars in a perfectly different light from all others, in fact, that you consider them as nuisances and as enemies. If any thing like this be your feeling, how can you expect to do them justice, as between man and man? I think we are doubly bound to treat them kindly, *because they are down*, and because they and their hangers-on have still some influence as affecting the public peace and contentment. I would simply do to them as I would be done by.”†

It does not appear that Sir Henry's advice had much influence on his brother John in his treatment of the people of the Panjab.

When the Mutiny broke out, the people of the Panjab were kept loyal by being *plundered* of their wealth.

“The forced loan at the rate of 6 per cent. interest, which early in the Mutiny had been levied by order of Sir John Lawrence on different districts of the Punjab, had been raised with some difficulty, for the visits of the tax-gatherer are never pleasant, and the money-loving Sikh was not likely to give his money readily in support of a doubtful cause, but raised it had been. And it proved a master-stroke of policy, for it supplied us with funds when we needed them most sorely, and bound the landowners and merchants to the cause of our Government by ties the force of which they could not fail to recognize.”‡

The murder in cold blood and with inhuman atrocities of some of the Sikh Gurus at Delhi by order of the degenerate later Mughal sovereigns made the Sikhs take the vow of revenge on that capital of the Mughals. The loot of Delhi was a day-dream with the followers of Guru Govind and Banda. Sir John Lawrence took advantage of their day-dream and despatched them in numbers to that unhappy capital to realize it.

“The Sikhs, among whose traditional day-dreams the sack of Delhi had ever been prominent, now found themselves within reach of the realisation of their fondest wishes. No scruples restrained them...Their natural astuteness,...had taught them how to discern the lurking places of concealed

\* Bosworth Smith's *Life of Lord Lawrence*, Vol. I, p. 287.

† *Life of Sir Henry Lawrence*, by Sir Herbert Edwardes and Herman Merivale, Vol. II, p. 195.

‡ Bosworth Smith's *Life of Lord Lawrence*, Vol. II, p. 308.

treasure. It might be buried beneath the floors of their houses or bricked up in their walls. In the former case it might be ascertained by pouring water through the crevices, for if the space below were excavated it would soon filter down, if not would return to the level of the floor. In the latter, the wall might be sounded as a physician sounds the chests of a patient, and the results of this process of auscultation were very convincing to our Sikh comrades,... It was clearly ascertained that large quantities of plunder were handed over walls to their brethren below, and that afterwards numbers of laden carts passed out at the opposite gates of the city. ..."

It was thus that, with the aid of the Sikhs, the mutiny was suppressed, which made Sir John Lawrence write to Sir Frederick Currie, in 1858:

"Under the mercy of God the loyalty and contentment of the people of the Punjab has saved India. Had the Punjab gone, we must have been ruined."†

During the Nepal War, Oudh was made the base of operations and its sovereign advanced money to Lord Hastings to prosecute the war against the Gurkhas. This was rankling in the breast of those mountaineers, and so on the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny, the sturdy Highlanders crossed their frontiers to carry fire and sword through Oudh. Sir Jang Bahadur boasted of having 'massacred five or six thousand' subjects of Oudh on his 'way to Lucknow.' The Gurkhas became rich by the plunder of Lucknow. The son of Wajid Ali Shah appealed, without success, to the ruler of Nepal to make common cause with the Mutineers against the English.

It is necessary to consider how far the atrocities and barbarities attributed to the Mutineers are true, and if true whether such atrocities are unprecedented in the annals of mankind. The natives of Hindustan have been painted in the blackest colour possible by the Christian people of the West. British historians of the Indian Mutiny have abused in no measured terms the natives of India for their alleged atrocities on English men, women and children at Delhi, Cawnpur and Jhansi. An allegation like this is easier to make than to disprove. It is the memory of these alleged barbarities on their women and children which still rankles in the breasts of the natives of England, and which makes anything approaching friendship or good feeling between natives of England and India impossible. There can be no doubt that there is a great deal of falsehood and exaggeration in the British narrative of Indian atrocities and barbarities. Lying is a virtue not solely monopolized by 'vile Asiatics,' but is equally laid claim to by Europeans.

Regarding these alleged atrocities, Mr. Justin McCarthy writes :

"The elementary passions of manhood were inflamed by the stories, *happily not true*, of the wholesale dishonour and barbarous mutilation of women. ... As a matter of fact, no indignities, other than that of the compulsory corn-grinding, were put upon the English ladies. ... There were no outrages, in the common acceptation of the term, upon women. No English women were stripped or dishonoured, or purposely mutilated."§

Granting even that the Mutineers were guilty of the alleged atrocities, which must

\* Kaye's *History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. III, p. 640.

† Bosworth Smith's *Life of Lord Lawrence*, Vol. II, p. 385.

§ *History of our own Times*, Vol. III.

certainly then be unreservedly condemned, we should consider whether such atrocities are unprecedented in the annals of mankind. An English writer says:

"It is only with a painful moral effort that one can dwell with cool and deliberate judgment on this subject, but it is highly necessary to call attention to the fact that there is not anything peculiarly 'Asiatic' in the authentic horrors of Jhansi, Delhi and Cawnpore. In the outbreak of an exasperated people, and especially where a marked distinction of race adds rancour and terror to the feelings of the insurgents, extermination is always their plan. It was so during the Greek uprising of 1821, when upwards of twenty thousand Turks, a peaceful agricultural population—men, women and children—were murdered in cold blood '*as a necessary measure of wise policy*,' according to Hetairists, 'because the Turkish population in Greece was small and could not be removed.'"

The Duke of Cumberland and his followers were Europeans and Christians. What did they do upon their Scotch co-religionists and to a certain extent their fellow-countrymen?

"After the victory of Culloden the Duke of Cumberland advanced with the army into the Highlands, as far as fort Augustus, where he encamped. He then sent off detachments on all sides to hunt down the fugitives, and lay waste the country with fire and sword. The castles of Glengarry and Lochiel were plundered and burned, every house, hut, or habitation met with the same fate without distinction, all the cattle and provisions were carried off. The men were shot on the mountains, like wild beasts, or put to death in cold blood without form of trial. The women, after having seen their husbands and fathers murdered, were violated, and then turned out naked, with their children, to starve on the 'barrane' heaths. One whole family was shut up in a barn and burnt up to death.

"The Duke's ministers of vengeance carried out their work so promptly and thoroughly that in a few days there was neither house, cottage, man or beasts, to be seen in the compass of fifty miles. All was ruin and desolation, silence, solitude, and death."

We have also to consider whether, after the suppression of the Mutiny, innocent citizens were not unnecessarily killed. The truth of this assertion even the *Pioneer* does not deny. For that paper says:

"It is true that after the capture of cities like Lucknow and Cawnpore too many innocent Hindus were summarily tried and executed on the information given by their lying countrymen, which could not be sufficiently sifted."

Mark, the *Pioneer* says 'innocent Hindus' only were executed, as if 'too many innocent' Mussalmans also were not the victims of the wrath of the enraged natives of England engaged in the task of suppressing the Mutiny. But then we forget that the *Pioneer* has to befriend the Muhammadans and does not wish to remind them that too many of their innocent co-religionists were summarily tried and executed after the suppression of the Mutiny.

But was it on the information of the 'lying' natives of India that 'too many innocent Hindus were summarily tried and executed'? Let us see what English authors have to say on the subject. Kaye writes:

"Martial Law had been proclaimed, those terrible Acts passed by the Legislative Council in May and June were in full operation, and soldiers and civilians alike were holding Bloody Assizes, or slaying Natives without any assize at all, regardless of sex or age. Afterwards the thirst for blood

\* Findlay's *Greek Revolution*, Volume I, pp. 172, 182, 187, 188." *Torrens' Empire in India*, p. 5.

grew stronger still. It is on the records of our British Parliament, in papers sent home by the Governor-General of India in Council, that 'the aged women, and children' are sacrificed, as well as those guilty of rebellion. They were not deliberately hanged, but burnt to death in their villages, perhaps now and then accidentally shot. Englishmen did not hesitate to boast or to record their boasting in writing, that they had spared no one, and that peppering away at niggers was very pleasant pastime, enjoyed amazingly. And it has been stated, in a book patronised by high official authorities, that 'for three months eight dead-carts daily went their rounds from sun-rise to sun-set to take down the corpses which hung at the cross-roads and market places' and that 'six thousand, beings had been thus 'summarily disposed of and launched into eternity',.....An Englishman is almost suffocated with indignation when he reads that Mr. Chambers or Miss Jennings was hacked to death by a dusky ruffian, but in Native histories or, history being wanting, in native legends and traditions, it may be recorded against our people, that mothers and wives and children, with their familiar names, fell miserable victims to the first swoop of English vengeance, and these stories may have as deep a pathos as any that rend our own hearts. It may be, too, that the plea of provocation, which invests the most sanguinary acts of the white man in this deadly struggle with the attributes of righteous retribution, is not wholly to be rejected when urged in extenuation of the worst deeds of those who have never known Christian teaching."

Sir Charles Dilke says:

"Those who doubt that Indian Military service makes soldiers careless of men's lives, reckless as to the rights of property, and disgraceful of human dignity, can hardly remember the letters which reached home in 1857, in which an officer in high command during the march upon Cawnpore reported, 'good bag to-day, polished off rebels,' it being borne in mind that the 'rebels' thus hanged or blown from guns were not taken in arms, but villagers apprehended 'on suspicion.' During this March atrocities were committed in the burning of villages and massacre of innocent inhabitants at which Mohamed Toglak himself would have stood ashamed, and it would be to contradict all history to assert that a succession of such deeds would not prove fatal to our liberties at home."

Again, the same author writes:

"The two favourite Anglo-Indian stories are that, of the native who being asked his religion, said 'Me Christian—me get drunk like Massa,' and that of the young officer who, learning Hindoostanee in 1858, had the difference between the negative "ne" and the particle "ne" explained to him by the moonshee, when he exclaimed, 'Dear me! I hanged lots of natives last year for admitting that they had not been in the villages for months. I suppose they meant to say that they had not left their villages for months. It is certain that in the suppression of the Mutiny hundreds of natives were hanged by Queen's Officers who, unable to speak a word of any native language, could neither understand evidence nor defence.'"

Many a joke has been cracked at the expense of the English-educated native of India for his quaint and unidiomatic use of the English language. Several books on "Babu" English have been written. But there was never any human life sacrificed by "Baboo English." On the other hand, many natives of England have murdered many Indians owing to their ignorance of Indian languages and of the customs and manners of the natives of India.

It is an ill-wind that blows nobody any good. Did the Mutiny then produce no

\* Kaye's *History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. II.

† Dilke's *Greater Britain*.

§ *Ibid.*

beneficial effect? Certainly, the Mutiny was not without its lessons. Mr. Digby in his work, *India for Indians and for England* writes:

“Without shedding of blood there is no remission....The English people will learn by one way only. They would not displace the Company of merchants from supreme rule in India until there had been a frightful Mutiny due to misgovernment.”

Mr. Justin McCarthy says:

“The Indian Mutiny startled the public feeling of England out of this state of unhealthy languor. . . Some eminent Englishmen were found to express alarm at the very sanguinary methods of repression and punishment that were in favour among most of our fellow-countrymen in India.”†

It should be remembered that but for the Mutiny, the Proclamation of Queen Victoria, which is looked upon by the natives of India as the Magna Charta of their liberties, would never have been issued.

## CHAPTER XCV

### THE TRANSFER OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA FROM THE COMPANY TO THE CROWN

The charter of the East India Company used to be renewed after every twenty years. The period for which the Government of India was to be vested in the Company used to be specified in the Charter Act. The Company's Charter was renewed for the last time in 1853. But singularly enough, the period for which the Company was to run the destinies of the peoples and princes of Hindustan was not specified therein. There was then something in the Act from which it was not unreasonable to deduce that the Company was doomed to extinction. The people of England were fast developing into an industrial nation. The free trade principle which they came to act upon, chiefly through the powerful speeches and writings of Cobden, Bright and other radicals in politics, and which was chiefly meant to make their bread cheap, made them naturally look upon India as supplying their bodily needs and satisfying their inner man. The sonorous and high-sounding phrase, 'development of the resources of India,' meant that India should be bled mercilessly and also that India was not to be for Indians, who should be treated as foes and aliens in the land of their birth. The existence of the East India Company stood in the way of the 'development of the resources of India' in that rapid manner which the natives of England desired.

Then again, the natives of England were desirous of colonising India and the East India Company stood in the way of their doing so.

These were perhaps the principal reasons which made the natives of England agitate for the abolition of the East India Company and the transfer of the Government to the Crown.

Whether such a transfer would be beneficial to the natives of India, never entered into the calculation of the agitators, whose conduct was being guided by the principle of 'enlightened selfishness.' They were only looking for an opportunity to get the object so dear to their heart effected. The outbreak of the Sepoy Revolt afforded them that opportunity. To prevent the recurrence of such an insurrection, the drastic remedy was proposed that the Government of India should be transferred from the Company to the Crown.

In the beginning of the year 1858, when the proposal of the transfer of the Government of India from the Company to the Crown was made by the natives of England, the East India Company presented a petition to both Houses of Parliament. It was presented to the House of Commons by Mr. J. Baring on the 9th and to the House of Lords by Earl Grey on the 11th February, 1858. The petition was drawn up by John Stuart Mill, who was an employee in the India House. This petition is reproduced as an appendix to this chapter.

The petitioners very pointedly drew the attention of the Houses to the doctrine which was then being promulgated "that India should be administered with an especial view to the benefit of the English who reside there."

As if to confirm and emphasise this doctrine, the House of Commons ordered on the 16th of March, 1858, the appointment of a Select Committee "to inquire into the progress and prospects, and the best means to be adopted for the promotion of European colonization and settlement in India, especially in the Hill Districts and healthier climates of that country, as well as for the extension of our commerce with Central Asia."

After this, need any one wonder that the transfer of the Government of India from the Company to the Crown was made *solely* with the "view to the benefit of the English?" The interests of the natives of India were meant to be sacrificed by the transfer for the benefit of the natives of England.

It is not necessary here to refer at length to the discussion and speeches which the Petition of the Company evoked in both Houses of Parliament. That able lawyer and writer, Sir George Lewis, made a speech in the House of Commons on the 12th February, 1858, in which he condemned the East India Company because

"It is a maxim in mechanics that nothing is stronger in a body than its weakest part. It is not at moments of calm and prosperity that defects in our institutions are discovered."

He was not for mending, but for ending the Company because of its "defects."

Such were the arguments of others also who took part in the discussions.

Sir Charles (afterwards Lord) Metcalfe had also written that it would be better for India, if her Government were transferred from the Company to the Crown. Said he:

"Although it seems to be a matter of indifference to the native population whether India be governed through the Company, or directly by the Ministers of the Crown, it is not so to another class of subjects.

"The Europeans settled in India, and not in the Company's service, and to these might be added generally the East Indians of mixed breed, will never be satisfied with the Company's Government. Well or ill founded, they will always attach to it the notion of monopoly and exclusion, . . . For the contentment of this class, which, for the benefit of India and the security of our Indian Empire, ought greatly to increase in numbers and importance, the introduction of a King's Government is undoubtedly desirable. . . .

"A King's Government is also the one which is most likely to be permanent, as the Company's hold under a Charter must be liable to periodical changes and reversions, whether for renewal or subversion."

At a later period of his life, Sir Charles Metcalfe, with a greatly enlarged knowledge of European politics, saw occasion to modify the opinion here expressed in favor of the Government of India directly by the Crown. Government by the Crown is in reality government by a parliamentary majority, and Sir Charles Metcalfe used to say, that, if that were applied to India, our tenure of the country would not be worth ten years' purchase."

So the fate of the East India Company was sealed and India came under the direct rule of England.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XCV

### PETITION OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

*Presented to the House of Commons by Mr. J. Baring on 9th and to the House of Lords by Earl Grey on 11th February, 1858.*

To the Right Honourable the Lords Spiritual and Temporal  
and the Honourable the Commons of the United  
Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament  
assembled.

Humbly sheweth,

That your Petitioners, at their own expense, and by the agency of their own civil and military servants, originally acquired for this country its magnificent empire in the East.

That the foundations of this empire were laid by your Petitioners, at that time neither aided nor controlled by Parliament, at the same period at which a succession of administrations under the control of Parliament were losing to the Crown of Great Britain another great empire on the opposite side of the Atlantic.

That during the period of about a century which has since elapsed, the Indian possessions of this country have been governed and defended from the resources of those possessions, without the smallest cost to the British Exchequer, which, to the best of your Petitioners' knowledge and belief, cannot be said of any other of the numerous foreign dependencies of the Crown.

That it being manifestly improper that the administration of any British possession should be independent of the general Government of the empire, Parliament provided, in 1783, that a department of the Imperial Government should have full cognizance of, and power of control over, the acts of your Petitioners in the administration of India, since which time the home branch of the Indian Government has been conducted by the joint counsels, and on the joint responsibility of your Petitioners and of a Minister of the Crown.

That this arrangement has at subsequent periods undergone reconsideration from the Legislature and various comprehensive and careful Parliamentary inquiries have been made into its practical operation, the result of which has been, on each occasion, a renewed grant to your Petitioners of the powers exercised by them in the administration of India.

That the last of these occasions was so recent as 1853, in which year the arrangements which had existed for nearly three-quarters of a century, were with certain modifications, re-enacted, and still subsist.

That, notwithstanding, your Petitioners have received an intimation from Her Majesty's Ministers of their intention to propose to Parliament a Bill for the purpose of placing the government of Her Majesty's East Indian dominion under the direct authority of the Crown—a change necessarily involving the abolition of the East India Company as an instrument of government.

That your Petitioners have not been informed of the reasons which have induced Her Majesty's Ministers, without any previous inquiry, to come to the resolution of putting an end to a system of administration, which Parliament, after inquiry, deliberately confirmed and sanctioned less than five years ago, and which, in its modified form, has not been in operation quite four years, and cannot be considered to have undergone a sufficient trial during that short period.

That your Petitioners do not understand that Her Majesty's Ministers impute any failure to those arrangements, or bring any charge, either great or small, against your Petitioners. But the time at which the proposal is made compels your Petitioners to regard it as arising from the calamitous events which have recently occurred in India.



That your Petitioners challenge the most searching investigation into the mutiny of the Bengal army, and the causes, whether remote or immediate, which produced that mutiny. They have instructed the Government of India to appoint a commission for conducting such an inquiry on the spot. And it is their most anxious wish that a similar inquiry may be instituted in this country by your [Lordships'] Honourable House, in order that it may be ascertained whether anything either in the constitution of the Home Government of India, or in the conduct of those by whom it has been administered, has had any share in producing the mutiny, or has in any way impeded the measures for its suppression, and whether the mutiny itself, or any circumstance connected with it, affords any evidence of the failure of the arrangements under which India is at present administered.

That, were it even true that these arrangements had failed, the failure could constitute no reason for divesting the East India Company of its functions, and transferring them to Her Majesty's Government. For, under the existing system, Her Majesty's Government have the deciding voice. The duty imposed upon the Court of Directors is to originate measures and frame drafts of instructions. Even had they been remiss in this duty, their remissness, however discreditable to themselves, could in no way absolve the responsibility of Her Majesty's Government, since the Minister for India possesses, and has frequently exercised, the power of requiring that the Court of Directors should take any subject into consideration, and prepare a draft despatch for his approval. Her Majesty's Government are thus in the fullest sense accountable for all that has been done, and for all that has been forborne or omitted to be done. Your Petitioners, on the other hand, are accountable only in so far as the act or omission has been promoted by themselves.

That, under these circumstances, if the administration of India had been a failure, it would, your Petitioners submit, have been somewhat unreasonable to expect that a remedy would be found in annihilating the branch of the ruling authority which could not be the one principally in fault, and might be altogether blameless, in order to concentrate all powers in the branch which had necessarily the decisive share in every error, real or supposed. To believe that the administration of India would have been more free from error had it been conducted by a Minister of the Crown without the aid of the Court of Directors, would be to believe that the Minister, with full power to govern India as he pleased, has governed ill because he had the assistance of experienced and responsible advisers.

That your Petitioners, however, do not seek to vindicate themselves at the expense of any other authority. They claim their full share of the responsibility of the manner in which India has practically been governed. That responsibility is to them not a subject of humiliation, but of pride. They are conscious that their advice and initiative have been, and have deserved to be, a great and potent element in the conduct of affairs in India. And they feel complete assurance that the more attention is bestowed and the more light thrown upon India and its administration, the more evident it will become that the government in which they have borne a part has been not only one of the purest in intention, but one of the most beneficent in act, ever known among mankind, that, during the last and present generation in particular, it has been, in all departments, one of the most rapidly improving governments in the world, and that, at the time when this change is proposed, a greater number of important improvements are in a state of more rapid progress than at any former period. And they are satisfied that whatever further improvements may be hereafter effected in India can only consist in the development of germs already planted, and in building on foundations already laid, under their authority, and in a great measure by their express instructions.

That such, however, is not the impression likely to be made on the public mind, either in England, or in India, by the ejection of your Petitioners from the place they fill in the Indian administration. It is not usual with statesmen to propose the complete abolition of a system of government, of which the practical operation is not condemned, and it might be generally inferred from the proposed measures, if carried into effect at the present time, that the East India Company having been intrusted with an important portion of the administration of India, have so abused

their trust as to have produced a sanguinary insurrection, and nearly lost India to the British empire, and that having thus crowned a long career of misgovernment, they have, in deference to public indignation, been deservedly cashiered for their misconduct.

That if the character of the East India Company were alone concerned, your Petitioners might be willing to await the verdict of history. They are satisfied that posterity will do them justice. And they are confident that even now justice is done to them in the minds, not only of Her Majesty's Ministers, but of all who have any claim to be competent judges of the subject. But though your Petitioners could afford to wait for the reversal of the verdict of condemnation which will be believed throughout the world to have been passed on them and their government by the British nation, your Petitioners cannot look without the deepest uneasiness at the effect likely to be produced on the minds of the people of India. To them, however incorrectly the name may express the fact, the British Government in India is the Government of the East India Company. To their minds the abolition of the Company will, for some time to come, mean the abolition of the whole system of administration with which the Company is identified. The measure, introduced simultaneously with the influx of an overwhelming British force, will be coincident with a general outcry, in itself most alarming to their fears, from most of the organs of opinion in this country as well as of English opinion in India, denouncing the past policy of the Government on the express ground that it has been too forbearing and too considerate towards the Natives. The people of India will at first feel no certainty that the new Government, or the Government under a new name which it is proposed to introduce, will hold itself bound by the pledges of its predecessors. They will be slow to believe that a Government has been destroyed only to be followed by another which will act on the same principles and adhere to the same measures. They cannot suppose that the existing organ of administration would be swept away without the intention of reversing any part of its policy. They will see the authorities, both at home and in India, surrounded by persons vehemently urging radical changes in many parts of that policy. And interpreting, as they must do, the change in the instrument of government, as a concession to these opinions and feeling, they can hardly fail to believe that, whatever else may be intended, the Government will no longer be permitted to observe that strict impartiality between those who profess those opinions and its native subjects which hitherto characterized it, that their strongest and most deeply-rooted feelings will henceforth be treated with much less regard than heretofore, and that a directly aggressive policy towards everything in their habits, or in their usages and customs, which Englishmen deem objectionable, will be no longer confined to individuals and private associations, but will be backed by all the power of Government.

And here your Petitioners think it important to observe that in abstaining as they have done from all interference with any of the religious practices of the people of India, except such as are abhorrent to humanity, they have acted not only from their own conviction of what is just and expedient but in accordance with the avowed intentions and express enactments of the Legislature, framed "in order that regard should be had to the civil and religious usages of the Natives," and also "that suits, civil and criminal, against the Natives," should be conducted according to such rules "as may accommodate the same to the religion and manners of the Natives." That their policy in this respect has been successful, is evidenced by the fact, that during a military mutiny, said to have been caused by unfounded apprehensions of danger to religion, the heads of the Native States, and the masses of the population, have remained faithful to the British Government. Your Petitioners need hardly observe how very different would probably have been the issue of the late events, if the Native princes, instead of aiding in the suppression of the rebellion, had put themselves at its head, or if the general population had joined in the revolt: and how probable it is that both these contingencies would have occurred, if any real ground had been given for the persuasion that the British Government intended to identify itself with proselytism. And it is the honest conviction of your Petitioners that any serious apprehension of a change of policy in this respect would be likely to be followed, at no distant period, by a general rising throughout India.

That your Petitioners have seen with the greatest pain the demonstrations of indiscriminate animosity towards the natives of India, on the part of our countrymen in India and at home, which have grown up since the late unhappy events. They believe these sentiments to be fundamentally unjust; they know them to be fatal to the possibility of good government in India. They feel that if such demonstrations should continue, and especially if weight be added to them by legislating under their supposed influence, no amount of wisdom and forbearance on the part of the Government will avail to restore that confidence of the governed in the intentions of their rulers without which it is vain even to attempt the improvement of the people.

*That your Petitioners cannot contemplate without dismay the doctrine now widely promulgated that India should be administered with an especial view to the benefit of the English who reside there; or that in its administration any advantage should be sought for Her Majesty's subjects of European birth, except that which they will necessarily derive from their superiority of intelligence, and from the increased prosperity of the people, the improvement of the productive resources of the country, and the extension of commercial intercourse. Your Petitioners regard it as the most honourable characteristic of the government of India by England, that it has acknowledged no such distinction as that of a dominant and a subject race but has held that its first duty was to the people of India. Your Petitioners feel that a great portion of the hostility with which they are assailed, is caused by the belief that they are peculiarly the guardians of this principle, and that so long as they have any voice in the administration of India, it cannot easily be infringed. And your Petitioners will not conceal their belief that their exclusion from any part in the Government is likely, at the present time, to be regarded in India as a first successful attack on that principle.*

That your Petitioners, therefore, most earnestly represent to your [Lordships] Honourable House, that even if the contemplated change could be proved to be in itself advisable, the present is a most unsuitable time for entertaining it, and they most strongly and respectfully urge on your [Lordships] Honourable House the expediency of at least deferring any such change until it can be effected at a period when it would not be, in the minds of the people of India, directly connected with the recent calamitous events, and with the feelings to which those events have either given rise or have afforded an opportunity of manifestation. Such postponement, your Petitioners submit, would allow time for a more mature consideration than has yet been given, or can be given in the present excited state of the public mind, to the various questions connected with the organization of a government for India, and would enable the most competent minds in the nation calmly to examine whether any new arrangement can be devised for the home Government of India uniting a greater number of the conditions of good administration than the present, and if so, which among the numerous schemes which have been, or may be, proposed, possesses those requisites in the greatest degree.

That your Petitioners have always willingly acquiesced in any changes which, after discussion by Parliament, were deemed conducive to the general welfare, although such changes may have involved important sacrifices to themselves. They would refer to their partial relinquishment of trade in 1813, to its total abandonment, and the placing of their Commercial Charter in abeyance, in 1833, to the transfer to India of their commercial assets, amounting to £15,858,000, a sum greatly exceeding that ultimately repayable to them in respect of their capital, independent of territorial rights and claims, and to their concurrence, in 1853, in the measure by which the Court of Directors was reconstructed, and reduced to its present number. In the same spirit, your Petitioners would most gladly co-operate with Her Majesty's Government in correcting any defects which may be considered to exist in the details of the present system, and they would be prepared, without a murmur, to relinquish their trust altogether, if a better system for the control of the Government of India can be devised. But, as they believe that in the construction of such a system there are conditions which cannot, without the most dangerous consequences, be departed from, your Petitioners respectfully and deferentially submit to the judgment of your [Lordships] Honourable House their view of those conditions, in the hope that if your [Lordships] Honourable House should see reason to agree in that view, you

will withhold your legislative sanction from any arrangement for the Government of India which does not fulfil the conditions in question in at least an equal degree with the present.

That your Petitioners may venture to assume that it will not be proposed to vest the home portion of the administration of India in a Minister of the Crown, without the adjunct of a Council composed of statesmen experienced in Indian affairs. Her Majesty's Ministers cannot but be aware that the knowledge necessary for governing a foreign country, and in particular a country like India, requires as much special study as any other profession, and cannot possibly be possessed by any one who has not devoted a considerable portion of his life to the acquisition of it.

That in constituting a body of experienced advisers to be associated with the Indian Minister, your Petitioners consider it indispensable to bear in mind that this body should not only be qualified to advise the Minister, but also, by its advice, to exercise, to a certain degree, a moral check. It cannot be expected that the Minister, as a general rule, should himself know India, while he will be exposed to perpetual solicitations from individuals and bodies, entirely ignorant of that country, or knowing only enough to impose on those who know still less than themselves, and having very frequently objects in view other than the interests or good government of India. The influences likely to be brought to bear on him through the organs of popular opinion will, in the majority of cases, be equally misleading. The public opinion of England, itself necessarily unacquainted with Indian affairs, can only follow the promptings of those who take most pains to influence it, and these will generally be such as have some private interest to serve. It is, therefore, your Petitioners submit, of the utmost importance that any council which may form a part of the Home Government of India should derive sufficient weight from its constitution, and from the relation it occupies to the Minister, to be a substantial barrier against those inroads of self-interest and ignorance in this country from which the Government of India has hitherto been comparatively free, but against which it would be too much to expect that Parliament should of itself afford a sufficient protection.

That your Petitioners cannot well conceive a worse form of Government for India than a Minister with a Council whom he should be at liberty to consult or not at his pleasure, or whose advice he should be able to disregard, without giving his reasons in writing, and in a manner likely to carry conviction. Such an arrangement, your Petitioners submit, would be really liable to the objections, in their opinion, erroneously urged against the present system. Your Petitioners respectfully represent that any body of persons associated with the Minister, which is not a check, will be a screen. Unless the Council is so constituted as to be personally independent of the Minister, unless it feels itself responsible for recording an opinion on every Indian subject and pressing that opinion on the Minister, whether it is agreeable to him or not; and unless the Minister when he overrules their opinion, is bound to record his reasons, their existence will only serve to weaken his responsibility, and to give the colourable sanction of prudence and experience, to measures in the framing of which those qualities have had no share.

That it would be vain to expect that a new Council could have as much moral influence, and power of asserting its opinion with effect, as the Court of Directors. A new body can no more succeed to the feelings and authority which their antiquity and their historical antecedents give to the East India Company than a legislature under a new name, sitting in Westminster, would have the moral ascendancy of the Houses of Lords and Commons. One of the most important elements of usefulness will thus be necessarily wanting in any newly constituted Indian Council, as compared with the present.

That your Petitioners find it difficult to conceive that the same independence in judgment and act, which characterizes the Court of Directors, will be found in any council all of whose Members are nominated by the Crown. Owing their nomination to the same authority, many of them probably to the same individual Minister, whom they are appointed to check, and looking to him alone for their reappointment, their desire of recommending themselves to him, and their unwillingness to risk his displeasure by any serious resistance to his wishes, will be motives too strong not to be in danger of exercising a powerful and injurious influence over their conduct. Nor are your Petitioners aware of any mode in which that injurious influence could be guarded against, except by conferring

the appointments, like those of the judges, during good behaviour, which, by rendering it impossible to correct an error once committed, would be seriously objectionable.

That your Petitioners are equally unable to perceive how, if the controlling body is entirely nominated by the Minister, that happy independence of Parliamentary and party influence, which has hitherto distinguished the administration of India and the appointments to situations of trust and importance in that country, can be expected to continue. Your Petitioners believe that in no Government known to history have appointments to offices, and especially to high offices, been so rarely bestowed on any other considerations than those of personal fitness. This characteristic, but for which in all probability India would long since have been lost to this country, is, your Petitioners conceive, entirely owing to the circumstance that the dispensers of patronage have been persons unconnected with party, and under no necessity of conciliating Parliamentary support, that, consequently, the appointments to offices in India have been, as a rule, left to the unbiassed judgment of the local authorities, while the nominations to the civil and military services have been generally bestowed on the middle classes, irrespective of political considerations, and, in a large proportion, on the relatives of persons who had distinguished themselves by their services in India.

That your Petitioners, therefore, think it essential that at least a majority of the Council which assists the Minister for India with its advice, should hold their seats independently of his appointment.

That it is, in the opinion of your Petitioners, no less necessary that the order of the transaction of business should be such as to make the participation of the Council in the administration of India a substantial one. That to this end, it is, in the opinion of your Petitioners, indispensable that the despatches to India should not be prepared by the Minister and laid before the Council, but should be prepared by the Council and submitted to the Minister. This would be in accordance with the natural and obvious principle that persons chosen for their knowledge of a subject should suggest the mode of dealing with it, instead of merely giving their opinion on suggestions coming from elsewhere. This is also the only mode in which the members of the Council can feel themselves sufficiently important or sufficiently responsible to secure their applying their minds to the subjects before them. It is almost unnecessary for your Petitioners to observe, that the mind is called into far more vigorous action by being required to propose than by merely being called on to assent. The Minister has necessarily the ultimate decision. If he has also the initiative, he has all the powers which are of any practical moment. A body whose only recognized function was to find fault, would speedily let that function fall into desuetude. They would feel that their co-operation in conducting the government of India was not really desired, that they were only felt as a clog on the wheels of business. Their criticism on what had been decided without their being collectively consulted would be felt as importunate, as mere delay and impediment, and their office would probably be seldom sought but by those who were willing to allow its most important duties to become nominal.

That with the duty of preparing the despatches to India, would naturally be combined the nomination and control of the home establishments. This your Petitioners consider absolutely essential to the utility of the Council. If the officers through whom they work are in direct dependence upon an authority higher than theirs, all matters of importance will in reality be settled between the Minister and the subordinates, passing over the Council altogether.

That a third consideration, to which your Petitioners attach great importance, is, that the number of the Council should not be too restricted. 'India is so wide a field, that a practical acquaintance with every part of its affairs cannot be found combined in any small number of individuals. The Council ought to contain men of general experience and knowledge of the world, also men especially qualified by finance and revenue experience, by judicial experience, diplomatic experience, military experience. It ought to contain persons conversant with the varied social relations and varied institutions of Bengal, Madras, Bombay, the North-Western Provinces, the Punjab, and the Native States. Even the present Court of Directors, reduced as it is in numbers by the Act of 1853, does not contain all the varieties of knowledge and

experience desirable in such a body. Neither, your Petitioners submit, would it be safe to limit the number to that which would be strictly sufficient, supposing all the appointments to be the best possible. A certain margin should be allowed for failures, which, even with the most conscientious selection, will sometimes occur. Your Petitioners, moreover, cannot overlook the possibility that, if the nomination takes place by a Minister at the head of a political party, it will not always be made with exclusive reference to personal qualifications : and it is indispensable to provide that such errors or faults in the nominating authority, so long as they are only occasional, shall not seriously impair the efficiency of the body.

That while these considerations plead strongly for a body not less numerous than the present, even if only regarded as advisers of the Minister, their other office, as a check on the minister, forms, your Petitioners submit, a no less forcible objection to any considerable reduction of the present number. A body of six or eight will not be equal to one of eighteen in that feeling of independent self-reliance which is necessary to induce a public body to press its opinion on a Minister to whom that opinion\* is unacceptable. However unobjectionable in other respects so small a body may be constituted, reluctance to give offence will be likely, unless in extreme cases, to be a stronger habitual inducement in their minds than the desire to stand up for their convictions.

That if, in the opinion of your [Lordships'] Honourable House, a body can be constituted which unites the above enumerated requisites of good government in a greater degree than the Court of Directors, your Petitioners have only to express their humble hope that your endeavours for that purpose may be successful. But if, in enumerating the conditions of a good system of home government for India, your Petitioners have in fact enumerated the qualities possessed by the present system, then your Petitioners pray that your [Lordships'] Honourable House will continue the existing powers of the Court of Directors.

That your Petitioners are aware that the present Home Government of India is reproached with being a double Government ; and that any arrangement by which an independent check is provided to the discretion of the Minister will be liable to a similar reproach. But they conceive that this accusation originates in an entire misconception of the functions devolving on the Home Government of India, and in the application to it of the principles applicable to purely executive departments. The executive Government of India is and must be, seated in India itself. The Court of Directors is not so much an executive as a deliberative body. Its principal function, and that of the Home Government generally, is not to direct the details of administration, but to scrutinize and revise the past acts of the Indian Government ; to lay down principles, and issue general instructions for their future guidance, and to give or refuse sanction to great political measures, which are referred home for approval. These duties are more analogous to the function of Parliament, than to those of an Executive Board : and it might almost as well be said that Parliament, as that the Government of India, should be constituted on the principles applicable to Executive Boards. It is considered an excellence, not a defect, in the constitution of Parliament, to be not merely a double but a triple Government. An executive authority, your Petitioners submit, may often with advantage be single, because promptitude is its first requisite. But the function of passing a deliberate opinion on past measures, and laying down principles of future policy, is a business which, in the estimation of your Petitioners, admits of and requires the concurrence of more judgments than one. It is no defect in such a body to be double, and no excellence to be single : especially when it can only be made so by cutting off that branch of it which by previous training is always the best prepared and often the only one which is prepared at all, for its peculiar duty.

That your Petitioners have heard it asserted that, in consequence of what is called the double Government, the Indian authorities are less responsible to Parliament and the nation, than other departments of the government of the Empire, since it is impossible to know on which of the two branches of Home Government the responsibility ought to rest. Your Petitioners fearlessly affirm, that this impression is not only groundless, but the very reverse of the truth. The Home

Government of India is not less, but more responsible, than any other branch of the administration of the State, inasmuch as the President of the Board of Commissioners, who is the Minister for India, is as completely responsible as any other of Her Majesty's ministers, and in addition, his advisers also are responsible. It is always certain, in the case of India, that the President of the Board of Commissioners must have either commanded or sanctioned all that has been done. No more than this, your Petitioners submit, can be known in the case of the head of any department of Her Majesty's Government. For it is not, nor can it rationally be supposed, that any Minister of the Crown is without trusted advisers, and the Minister for India must, for obvious reasons, be more dependent than any other of Her Majesty's Ministers, upon the advice of persons whose lives have been devoted to the subject on which their advice has been given. But in the case of India, such advisers are assigned to him by the constitution of the Government, and they are as much responsible for what they advise as he for what he ordains: while in other departments the Minister's official advisers are the subordinates in his office—men often of great skill and experience, but not in the public eye, often unknown to the public even by name, official reserve precludes the possibility of ascertaining what advice they give, and they are responsible only to the Minister himself. By what application of terms this can be called responsible government, and the joint government of your Petitioners and the India Board an irresponsible Government, your Petitioners think it unnecessary to ask.

That without knowing the plan on which Her Majesty's Ministers contemplate the transfer to the Crown of the servants of the Company, your Petitioners find themselves unable to approach the delicate question of the Indian Army further than to point out that the high military qualities of the officers of that army have unquestionably sprung in a great degree from its being a principal and substantive army, holding Her Majesty's commission and enjoying equal rank with Her Majesty's officers, and your Petitioners would earnestly deprecate any change in that position.

That your Petitioners, having regard to all these considerations, humbly pray your Honourable House, that you will not give your sanction to any change in the constitution of the Indian Government during the continuance of the present unhappy disturbances, nor without a full previous inquiry into the operations of the present system. And your Petitioners further pray that this inquiry may extend to every department of Indian administration. Such an inquiry, your Petitioners respectfully claim, not only as a matter of justice to themselves, but because, when for the first time in this century, the thoughts of every public man in the country are fixed on India, an inquiry would be more thorough, and its results would carry much more instruction to the mind of Parliament and of the country, than at any preceding period.

## CHAPTER XCVI

### THE PROCLAMATION OF QUEEN VICTORIA

The Sepoy Mutiny had not been yet quelled when the Government of India was transferred from the Company to the Crown. Under the circumstance it was the most diplomatic move on the part of Queen Victoria and her advisers to issue the Proclamation. It was calculated to smooth the ruffled feelings of the people and reconcile them to the rule of England. And the Proclamation succeeded most admirably in its object or objects.

The natives of India, in the simplicity of their hearts, look upon the Proclamation as the Magna Charta of their liberties. Much nonsense is talked by those who take their stand on this Proclamation and demand equal rights and privileges with British citizens. Such deluded men should be reminded of what the celebrated English historian<sup>\*</sup> Freeman, wrote of proclamations in general.

"...But when we come to manifestoes, proclamations,...here we are in the very chosen region of lies,...He is of childlike simplicity indeed who believes every act of Parliament, as telling us not only what certain august persons did, but the motives which led them to do it, so is he who believes that the verdict and sentence of every court was necessarily perfect righteousness, even in times where orders were sent beforehand for the trial and execution of such a man."

They should also be reminded of what that well-known jurist, Sir James Stephen, said regarding the Queen's Proclamation. That eminent lawyer said that the Proclamation was merely a ceremonial document. It was not a treaty, and so it did not impose any responsibility and obligation on the English people.

We should not also forget why it was necessary to issue the Proclamation in November, 1858—a proclamation full of noble and philanthropic sentiments. Ever since the outbreak of the Mutiny, the stay-at-home natives of England were talking of avenging the ill-treatment which their kith and kin had received in India at the hands of the natives. India was no longer to be governed for the benefit of the natives of India. A Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed in March, 1858, "to inquire into the progress and prospects, and the best means to be adopted for the promotion of European colonization and settlement in India, especially in the Hill Districts and healthier climates of that country, as well as for the extension of our commerce with Central Asia."

It was under the above circumstances necessary to do something to cover the ulterior designs of the English people by the show of philanthropy. This most probably accounts for the genesis of the proclamation.

Assuming even for the sake of argument that Queen Victoria issued that proclamation out of love for the people of India, that is to say, that she was prompted

\* Freeman's *Methods of Historical Study*, London, 1886, pp. 258-259.



by pure philanthropy, she knew that, being a constitutional sovereign, she could not compel her ministers to carry into execution all that she had laid down in the Proclamation. The English monarch is merely an ornamental figure-head and hence the English proverb which says that kings and queens can do no wrong. The converse of that proverb is also applicable to the kings and queens of England, that is, they cannot set any wrong right. They cannot go against the wishes of the English people. It is on record that the Proclamation, when first drafted by one of the Ministers of the Queen, did not meet with her approval. In the *Review of Reviews* for April, 1897, W. T. Stead wrote :

"The Queen was abroad when the first draft of the Proclamation reached her. It was a miserable, jejune document, without heart in it or religion, and withal it had the incredible ill-taste to allude to the power the Government possessed of undermining native religions and customs. The Queen was revolted at the threat. The Proclamation would never do : —

"Her Majesty disapproves of the expression which declares that she has the power of 'undermining the Indian religions'. Her Majesty would prefer that the subject should be introduced in a declaration in the sense that 'the deep attachment which Her Majesty feels to her own religion, and the comfort and happiness which she derives from its consolation, will preclude her from any attempt to interfere with the native religions, and that her servants will be directed to act scrupulously in accordance with her directions.'

"But she was not satisfied with merely indicating objections in detail, she had the whole Proclamation rewritten. She wrote :

"The Queen would be glad if Lord Derby would write it himself in his excellent language, bearing in mind that it is a female Sovereign who speaks to more than a hundred millions of Eastern people on assuming the direct government of them and after a bloody civil war, giving them pledges which her future reign is to redeem and explaining the principles of her government. Such a document should breathe feelings of generosity, benevolence, and religious toleration, and point out the privileges which the Indians will receive on being placed on an equality with the subjects of the British Crown, and the prosperity following the train of civilisation.

"The Proclamation was rewritten 'entirely in the spirit of your Majesty's observations.' But still the Queen was not quite satisfied, so she added in her own hand to the last sentence these words :

"May the God of all power grant to us and those in authority under us strength to carry out these our wishes for the good of our people !"

The Queen being an intelligent sovereign knew that the original proclamation, as drafted by her Ministers would have estranged the feelings of the people of India and so had the phraseology of the Proclamation altered.

But the people of India are of childlike simplicity to have put any faith in the Proclamation. One is forced into the belief that the Proclamation was issued to cover the ulterior designs of the English people for the exploitation of India.\*

\* See the chapter on Queen's Proclamation in my "Consolidation of the Christian Power in India."

Also, see John Malcolm Ludlow's "Thoughts on the Policy of the Crown towards the Princes and Peoples of India," Panini Office Reprint.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XCVI

### PROCLAMATION BY THE QUEEN IN COUNCIL TO THE PRINCES, CHIEFS, AND PEOPLE OF INDIA

Victoria, by the grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the Colonies and Dependencies thereof in Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Australia, Queen, Defender of the Faith.

Whereas, for divers weighty reasons, we have resolved by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in Parliament assembled, to take upon ourselves the Government of the territories in India heretofore administered in trust for us by the Honourable East India Company.

Now, therefore, we do by these presents notify and declare that, by the advice and consent aforesaid, we have taken upon ourselves the said government, and we hereby call upon all our subjects within the said territories to be faithful, and to bear true allegiance to us, our heirs and successors, and to submit themselves to the authority of those whom we may hereafter, from time to time, see fit to appoint to administer the government of our said territories, in our name and on our behalf.

And we, reposing special trust and confidence in the loyalty, ability, and judgment of our right trusty and well-beloved cousin and counsellor, Charles John, Viscount Canning, do hereby constitute and appoint him, the said Viscount Canning, to be our first Viceroy and Governor-General in and over our said territories and to administer the government thereof in our name, and generally to act in our name and on our behalf, subject to such orders and regulations as he shall, from time to time, receive from us through one of our principal Secretaries of State.

And we do hereby confirm in their several offices, civil and military, all persons now employed in the service of the Honourable East India Company, subject to our future pleasure, and to such laws and regulations as may hereafter be enacted.

We hereby announce to the native princes of India that all treaties and engagements made with them by or under the authority of the Honourable East India Company are by us accepted, and will be scrupulously maintained, and we look for the like observance on their part.

We desire no extension of our present territorial possessions, and while we will permit no aggression upon our dominions or our rights to be attempted with impunity, we shall sanction no encroachment on those of others. We shall respect the right, dignity, and honour of native princes as our own: and we desire that they, as well as our own subjects, should enjoy that prosperity, and that social advancement which can only be secured by internal peace and good government.

We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects, and those obligations, by the blessing of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil.

Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the right and desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our royal will and pleasure that none be in any wise favoured, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their religious faith or observances, but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law, and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of our subjects on pain of our highest displeasure.

And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability, and integrity, duly to discharge.

We know, and respect, the feelings of attachment with which the natives of India regard the lands inherited by them from their ancestors, and we desire to protect them in all rights connected therewith, subject to the equitable demands of the State, and we will that, generally, in framing and administering the law, due regard be paid to the ancient rights, usages, and customs of India.

We deeply lament the evils and misery which have been brought upon India by the acts of ambitious men, who have deceived their countrymen by false reports, and led them into open rebellion. Our power has been shown by the suppression of that rebellion in the field, we desire to show our mercy by pardoning the offences of those who have been thus misled, but who desire to return to the path of duty.

Already, in one province, with a view to stop the further effusion of blood, and to hasten the pacification of our Indian dominions, our Viceroy and Governor-General has held out the expectation of pardon, on certain terms, to the great majority of those who, in the late unhappy disturbances, have been guilty of offences against our Government, and has declared the punishment which will be inflicted on those whose crimes place them beyond the reach of forgiveness. We approve and confirm the said act of our Viceroy and Governor-General, and do further announce and proclaim as follows :

Our clemency will be extended to all offenders, save and except those who have been, or shall be, convicted of having directly taken part in the murder of British subjects. With regard to such the demands of justice forbid the exercise of mercy.

To those who have willingly given asylum to murderers, knowing them to be such, or who may have acted as leaders or instigators in revolt, their lives alone can be guaranteed, but, in apportioning the penalty due to such persons, full consideration will be given to the circumstances under which they have been induced to throw off their allegiance; and large indulgence will be shown to those whose crimes may appear to have originated in the credulous acceptance of the false reports circulated by designing men.

To all others in arms against the Government we hereby promise unconditional pardon, amnesty, and oblivion of all offence against ourselves, our crown, and dignity, on their return to their homes and peaceful pursuits.

It is our royal pleasure, that these terms of grace and amnesty should be extended to all those who comply with these conditions before the 1st day of January next.

When, by the blessing of Providence, internal tranquillity shall be restored, it is our earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India, to promote works of public utility and improvement, and to administer its government for the benefit of all our subjects resident therein. In their prosperity will be our strength, in their contentment our security, and in their gratitude our best reward. And may the God of all power grant to us, and to those in authority under us, strength to carry out these our wishes for the good of our people.

## CHAPTER XCVII

### THE END OF THE COMPANY'S RULE

With the Proclamation of Queen Victoria, read by Lord Canning on the 1st of November, 1858, in Allahabad, terminated the rule of the East India Company. Allahabad forms an important landmark in the history of the Christian Power in India, for, it was here that Clive obtained the Dewany of Bengal from Shah Alam on the 12th of August 1765. The termination of the government of the Christian merchant "adventurers" who were "not gentlemen," was announced in that city standing at the confluence of the Ganges and the Jamna. The natives of Great Britain were certainly not proud of the rise of the Christian Power in India, or of the deeds of the East India Company which won an empire for them in the Orient. Writes an English historian that—

"The establishment of the English power in India is an ugly one. It begins in feebleness and cowardice, it is pervaded by rapacity, it closes with a course of fraud and falsehood, of forgery and treason, as stupendous as ever lay at the foundation of a great empire. My Lord Macaulay, in that brilliant passage which opens his biographical sketch of Clive, expresses his astonishment at the little interest which we take in the story. I do not know any stronger instance of the short-sightedness of clever men when they only recognise the moral sense as something to flavour a narrative, as you might flavour a pudding with allspice or with mace. Our own consciences will long, ere this, have given the answer. . . It is the instinctive hypocrisy of shame which has kept us Englishmen aloof from the tale of the rise of our Indian empire. I suppose that the son of a transported convict in Sydney, whose father has won a fortune for him, who is rising in station and consideration himself, who is received at Government house, subscribes to charities, sits in front-pews at church, likes nothing less than to be reminded of the notorious robberies and burglaries by which his father won for himself a free passage to the antipodes, and if they happen to be recorded in the Newgate Calendar, would only be the more careful to exclude that exciting work from his library. Is it not so with us? Is it not in human nature that we should dislike to be reminded of the crimes which Clive and Warren Hastings, and all that shameless generation which surrounded them, committed for our benefit? I thank God that, until the Whig essayist and cabinet minister, no man had yet had the hardihood to see the picturesqueness of this shameful story, to measure its capabilities as the subject of a brilliant article in a review."

The passage quoted above shows how the Indian empire of the East India Company was gradually built up. The merchant "adventurers" never scrupled to make use of any means, fair or foul, to get their purposes served, and amass earthly riches, play the "nabobs" and promote industries in their native land from the "plunders piled from kingdoms not their own." It was thus — that England destroyed the trade and industries of India.

Regarding the government of the East India Company the author quoted above wrote :

"The present system of Indian Government of which that body forms yet the most prominent organs,—cumbrous, wasteful, inefficient, and dishonest as a piece of administrative machinery,—as a form of rule peculiarly ill adapted to fix the affections and loyalty of the native races of India,—has failed in practice in every one of the requisites of good government.

"It has failed to give security to person or property throughout by far the greater portion of India: sometimes by leaving the subject exposed to the open violence of brigands, always by placing him at the mercy of oppressive and fraudulent officials.

"The judicial system is dilatory, costly, and inefficient.

"The revenue system—contrary to almost every sound principle of political economy—seems devised in its different branches so as to promote the largest possible amount of oppression, extortion, and immorality.

"As a matter of fact, the population are in most parts of the country sinking alike in physical condition, and in moral character.

"Many of the above-mentioned evils are of British introduction, others have been aggravated under British rule.

"The good which has been done,—due in almost every instance to the special efforts of individuals, and generally thwarted at first,—has been for the most part extremely trifling, or partial and superficial."

"The most magnificent public works, such as the Canals of the North, and its one metalled road become wholly insignificant when compared with the vast number of works executed in native times,—many, in some districts, most of which remains yet in a state of decay, though the cess payable for their maintenance or the increased assessment due in respect of the surplus value which they are supposed to create, may still be exacted.

"A wholly new vice—drunkenness—has been introduced among the Hindoo population, is largely spreading and is fostered by the exigencies of the public revenue.

"In that part of India which lies most open to independent observation—Bengal,—sullen discontent is declared to characterise the rural population.†

No one can deny the fact that India has benefited by the abolition of "the Society of Adventurers" called the East India Company.

For an account of how the Company governed India, see "Government of India under a Bureaucracy" by John Dickinson, Jan., reprinted by the present writer.

\* "The famines of particular districts which revenue oppression did not allow the cultivator to meet when they occurred, which public works could invariably have prevented, must have swept away more lives than the lauded "humane" measures of the suppression of suttee, infanticide, etc. can ever have preserved.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 835-887.

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